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BERNADOTTE
PRINCE AND KING
1810-1844

By the Same Author

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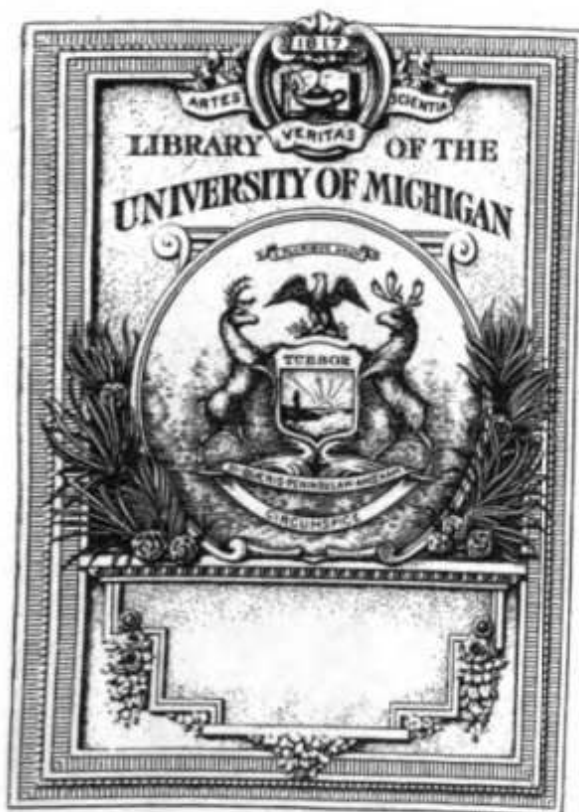


CHARLES XIV., KING OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE).
After the portrait by L. David.

[*Frontispiece.*

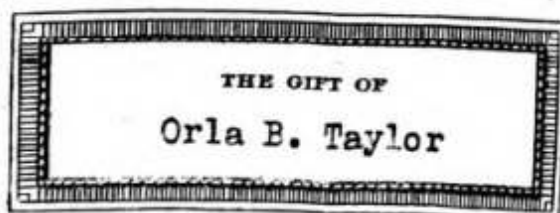
BERNADOTTE

PRINCE AND KING



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"BERNADOTTE
& IRELAND AND
F COURT," ETC.



LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

DUBLIN
HODGES, FIGGIS & CO., LTD., GRAFTON STREET

1925



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After the portrait by L. David.

[*Frontispiece.*

BERNADOTTE

PRINCE AND KING

1810-1844

BY THE RIGHT HONBLE.
SIR DUNBAR PLUNKET BARTON, BART.
K.C., P.C.

AUTHOR OF
"BERNADOTTE, THE FIRST PHASE (1763-1799)," "BERNADOTTE
AND NAPOLEON (1799-1810)," "LINKS BETWEEN IRELAND AND
SHAKESPEARE," "THE STORY OF OUR INNS OF COURT," ETC.



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INTRODUCTION

THIS book tells the story of Marshal Bernadotte's adventures as Crown Prince, and afterwards as King, of Sweden and of Norway; and it recounts the methods by which he succeeded in holding two thrones and in transmitting them to his descendants. His career has hardly a parallel for variety of scene and of incident. Behind the strange events of his life is the problem of his character, which has been referred to by Alfred Rambaud, an historian of repute, as "an indecipherable enigma." The key to the cipher is his Gascon raciality, the indelible marks of which will be recognised in almost every chapter of this book. He was described by Napoleon as "a true Gascon," by Albert Sorel as "a pure Gascon of Gascony," by Léonce Pingaud as "the most daring, the most extraordinary, and the most fortunate of the cadets of Gascony"; while Count E. M. de Vogué said of him that he was a complete epitome of his race, and that he reproduced "in his single personality twenty characteristic figures, Montluc and Cyrano, Henri iv. and d'Artagnan." Few public men have ever been so extravagantly belauded and so violently vilified. The present author has striven neither to extenuate anything nor to set down aught in malice. The story of his earlier life has been narrated in two other volumes,* and is summarised in an Appendix.

* *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, and *Bernadotte and Napoleon*.

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CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN
1810—1812

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BERNADOTTE

PRINCE AND KING

ERRATA

Page 15 n, 19 n, 27 n, 30 n : for " Geoffrey " read " Gefroy "

~~THE FIRST MOMENT, WHEN HE MADE NO STOP IN HIS JOURNEY~~
until on the 19th October he sighted the coast-line of his adopted country from the Danish seaport of Helsingör*. Crossing the Sound on the following day, he landed at Helsingborg, where he responded to an enthusiastic welcome in the following speech, which may be quoted as a fair example of his addresses of salutation to his new subjects.

" Gentlemen,—The Swedish King and nation have bestowed upon me a striking proof of their esteem and confidence. I have made every sacrifice in order to respond to it. I have left that France which has been the object of my existence until to-day. I have

* *Anglicè*, Elsinore.

PART I
CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN

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BERNADOTTE

PRINCE AND KING

CHAPTER I

THE DEBUT OF CHARLES JOHN, CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN

OCTOBER—DECEMBER 1810

ON the 30th September 1810 Bernadotte left Paris in order to assume his new name, and to take up the duties of his new position, as "Charles John, Crown Prince of Sweden." He was so delighted to escape from the Napoleonic yoke and so apprehensive that the Emperor might put some obstacle in his way at the last moment, that he made no stop in his journey until on the 19th October he sighted the coast-line of his adopted country from the Danish seaport of Helsingör*. Crossing the Sound on the following day, he landed at Helsingborg, where he responded to an enthusiastic welcome in the following speech, which may be quoted as a fair example of his addresses of salutation to his new subjects.

"Gentlemen,—The Swedish King and nation have bestowed upon me a striking proof of their esteem and confidence. I have made every sacrifice in order to respond to it. I have left that France which has been the object of my existence until to-day. I have

* *Anglicè*, Elsinore.

separated myself from the Emperor Napoleon, to whom a lively sense of gratitude and an infinity of other ties have attached me. It is not the hope of a crown that can compensate me for such substantial sacrifices. No, gentlemen: I shall find my true compensation in the happiness of my new country. I come among you, throwing everything aside with an ardent desire to leave nothing undone that can contribute to your prosperity. I bring to the King, who is so deservedly beloved by you all, a boundless devotion. Let us unite, gentlemen, in the effort to fulfil his paternal wishes; and let us preserve unimpaired that national glory which you owe to the valour and the virtue of his ancestry."

On the following day, having received from the hands of a King's messenger his brevet of appointment as Generalissimo of all the forces of the Crown by land and by sea, the Crown Prince proceeded to Stockholm by short stages. His journey was a triumphal progress. At some points he walked for miles accompanied by crowds of countryfolk who had come to meet him. At the centres of administration he stopped to converse with the provincial governors and other officials, or gave them seats in his carriage, and consulted them about the resources of their districts and the means of developing them.

Before the end of October the Prince reached Drottningholm, the country palace of the Swedish King. Count Suremain, the King's aide-de-camp, has described the first meeting of Charles XIII. with his adopted son. The aide-de-camp saw the Prince Royal cross the ante-room with easy assurance and enter the Royal presence. A few minutes later a bell rang, and a messenger was sent for the Queen. After the Royal Family, so strangely assorted, had remained together for some time, the door opened,



THE LANDING OF BERNADOTTE AT HELSINGBORG, 20TH OCTOBER, 1810.

and the King, having parted with the Prince, turned to Count Suremain and remarked with an expression of pleased surprise: "My dear Suremain, I have gambled heavily, and I believe that after all I have won." The old King never changed his mind.

On 31st October Bernadotte received a deputation of the Diet, with whom he exchanged the formalities confirming his election to the hereditary succession to the throne. He referred to that event as a decree of Providence which he felt it his duty to obey. "My soul," he exclaimed, "lifted me to the level of my new destiny. When I set foot on Swedish soil, I had already become entirely Swedish." A few days afterwards, on 2nd November, the Prince made his state entry into Stockholm, and on the 5th he was solemnly instituted as heir to the throne in the presence of the King, the four Houses of the Diet, the principal officials of the Kingdom and the foreign diplomatic corps. After the ceremony the Prince delivered an address in the course of which he proclaimed his hatred of war, and his preference for a policy of Peace and National Progress. When he became King, he carried out these aspirations to the letter.

"Bred in camps, I bring you a frank and loyal heart, an absolute devotion to the King, my august father, and an ardent desire to do all in my power for my new country. . . . I have seen war at close quarters, and I know its evils. Conquests cannot console a country for the shedding of her children's blood on foreign soil. I have seen the great Emperor of the French, crowned with so many victorious laurels, surrounded by his inviolable army, sighing for the olive branch of peace. . . . Peace is the only glorious aim of a wise and enlightened government. It is not the extent of a State's Dominions which constitute its powers and independence, but its laws,

commerce, industries, and national spirit. Sweden has sustained severe losses, but the honour of the Swedish name remains unsoiled."

Napoleon, when he heard a report of Bernadotte's reception and of his speeches, said with a sneer : " What good will this ebb and flow of rhetoric do ? The Swedes are Jacobinical and anarchical enough already. The Crown Prince does not understand how to manage them." But Napoleon understood the Swedes as little as he understood the Spaniards.

A volume might be filled with a full report of the ceremonies of which Bernadotte was the centre, and of the addresses which he delivered in eloquent French to the various public bodies who came to welcome and congratulate him. Let us be content to supplement the extracts already cited by quoting a Swedish eye-witness's graphic description of her impressions of the new Crown Prince on the occasion of the ceremony of taking the oath of allegiance. The following was the ungrammatical word-picture which Madame Arfwedson, a lady of the Swedish Court, gave to Sarah Lady Lyttelton :

" His entry—how handsome, how tall, how commanding his look—very martial and stern, amid vast huzzas and the deep emotion of all ranks. His taking the oath of allegiance—he was placed on a chair of State, dressed in a blue and gold mantle, a coronet on his head, on the lowest step of the empty throne in the chapel. The King entered, much bent and weak with age. Bernadotte rose and met and supported him to the throne. Then, when the proclamation was read declaring him the King's only son, his starting up, throwing himself at the old man's feet, and attempting to kiss his hand, but was paternally embraced. When the Oath was to be taken, his animated humility in casting away the coronet and swearing allegiance, and then his very grand and

imposing manner of rising at once to address, and quite humble the nobles in an eloquent speech. His first look at them, *de quoi faire trembler les plus fiers*. Very encouraging to the peasants." She added much about his sweet smile, and his simplicity of manner in society.^a

At first Bernadotte appears to have adopted an attitude of *hauteur* and of reserve towards the nobles and courtiers, in whose ranks there had been considerable opposition to his election as Crown Prince. His warmest supporters had been the soldiers, the middle classes, and the peasants, and he lost no opportunity of rooting himself firmly in their good opinions.

His relations with his adopted parents were always intimate and affectionate. He quickly became the life and soul of the royal circle, playing with grace and tenderness the part of the adopted son of the King and Queen, and interesting them by his vivacious conversation and by his endless fund of memories and experiences. It was currently reported in Stockholm that a powerful clique of political intriguers lost no time in inviting him to displace the feeble old King, and to seize the crown by a *coup d'état*. Bernadotte is said to have dismissed them, indignantly declaring that he would prefer to end his life at the point of the sword, than so basely to betray his duty. This story was repeated to Sarah Lady Lyttelton when she visited Stockholm soon afterwards,^b and is confirmed by a report to the British Government from an Agent in Sweden to the effect that hopes were entertained of "the death of the King and of the accession of Bernadotte, who has a strong following."

^a *Correspondence of Sarah Lady Lyttelton*, 161, 162.

^b *Ibid.*, 161.

The following passage was written by the Queen in her journal two months after Bernadotte's arrival :

" The King seeks every opportunity of showing his regard for the Crown Prince, and I begin myself to feel a high esteem for him. His manner and behaviour have gained my friendship, and the attitude which he has adopted towards the King cannot be sufficiently praised. A real son could not pay more attention and veneration than the Prince Royal does to the King. All his actions both to me and to the King and to all his *entourage* are such as to win the affection of the people, and he is beginning to be generally beloved."^a

Even more remarkable was the favourable impression which he made upon the Queen-Dowager, mother of the dethroned King, and widow of his predecessor. Rumours were rife then and afterwards of hostility on her part towards the new Crown Prince, and even of plots to poison " the usurper " of her son's throne. But in the winter of 1810 she was heard to describe Bernadotte as " Un Prince tout à fait aimable," and to declare that his manner reminded her of the refinements of the Court of her young days, adding with a sigh : " When it is I who says that Sweden has made a happy choice, you may believe what comes from the mother of Gustavus IV."^b

Count Suremain, the King's Aide-de-Camp, who had experience of Court life both in Stockholm and in Paris, used to tell his friends that " Upon everyone who approached him Napoleon exercised the empire of genius, Bernadotte that of grace, address,

^a *Journal of the Queen Charlotte, December 1810 ; cf. La Fin d'une Dynastie, 487, 489.*

^b *La Fin d'une Dynastie, 488.*



KING CHARLES XIII., BERNADOTTE'S ADOPTIVE FATHER.
After the portrait by Prafft.

and brilliancy (*de la grâce, de l'adresse et de l'esprit*). The former subjugated, the latter charmed."^a

The English Foreign Office was kept well informed about the progress of affairs in Sweden by their secret agents in that country, one of whom reported, within a month of the Prince's arrival, that he was "well liked so far." Another wrote that

"The Prince behaves with rare circumspection and leaves nothing undone to captivate and please. The bigwigs [*les grands faiseurs*] do not know where they are with him, because he says very little about affairs or about persons; and, as he knows nothing about the country, the reason of his reserve does him credit and tends to his advantage."^b

Bernadotte was quite sincere when he told the deputation of the Swedish Diet that, when he set foot on Swedish soil, he had already become "entirely Swedish." "From that hour," wrote an English journalist when summing up his career more than thirty years later, "Bernadotte, or, as he was thenceforward styled, Charles John, Crown Prince of Sweden, turned with undivided affection to his adopted country."^c

^a Suremain, 233.

^b F.O. 73, 61-64.

^c *The Times* (obituary notice, 21st March 1844).

CHAPTER II

NAPOLEON'S TYRANNICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS SWEDEN

OCTOBER 1810—DECEMBER 1811

ALTHOUGH the Prince, very soon after his arrival, succeeded in obtaining complete control of Sweden's foreign policy, he was careful at the beginning to refrain from exercising any authority ostensibly. For several months he attended the Council of State, but did not attempt to influence its decisions. He left the King to be guided by the advice of Count d'Engeström, General Adlercreutz, and his other Ministers. At this period he wisely devoted himself to taking advantage of the wave of enthusiasm with which his election had been received. He set himself to consolidate his popularity ; to study his new field of action ; to take the measure of the soldiers and statesmen by whom he was surrounded ; to ascertain the sources of the wealth of his new country, and to form an opinion as to the best means of advancing her prosperity and at the same time of placing his own dynasty upon a sure and firm foundation.

Before leaving France he had warned Napoleon that he was resolved to maintain Sweden's independence and not to be a vassal of the French Empire ; and he announced, soon after his arrival in his adopted country, " I wish to be neither Napoleon's prefect nor his chief customs officer."

This declaration was soon put to the test when

the French Minister in Sweden, Baron Alquier, conveyed to him a suggestion from Napoleon that Sweden should contribute a regiment to the French army and two thousand sailors to the French navy. Bernadotte rejected the suggestion as being incompatible with Swedish national independence. "What advantage should I gain," he asked Alquier, "by sending a regiment to serve with those of France?" "The advantage," said Alquier, "of having your officers trained in the best school in Europe." This tactless remark roused the ire of the ex-marshal, who retorted: "Be assured, sir, that the man who has, by his teaching and by his example, trained a multitude of French officers and generals, requires no help in the instruction and improvement of his troops." These conversations were reported to Napoleon, who abandoned the idea of getting soldiers and sailors in Sweden, and instructed Alquier, in the following February, to "let it be understood that the policy of the Emperor does not in any way depend upon Sweden, and that he wants nothing from her, neither officers, sailors, nor soldiers."

A far more serious cause of quarrel between Bernadotte and Napoleon arose out of Napoleon's "Continental System," which was aimed at entirely excluding British and Colonial goods and manufactures from all the European countries. For this purpose the British Isles were declared to be in a state of blockade, and all commerce with them was forbidden.

Sweden's commercial interests were bound up with those of England, and Napoleon's continental system damaged her perhaps more than any other nation. In vain had Sweden pleaded with Napoleon to be allowed to remain neutral between France and England. Napoleon had replied, "There are no

longer any neutrals ; you may choose between war or friendship." As a result of this tyrannical pressure, a treaty had been forced upon Sweden by which she undertook to adhere to Napoleon's continental system and to close her ports to British commerce. This treaty, as it imposed a suicidal policy upon Sweden, turned out to be a mere "scrap of paper." A contraband trade sprang up which the Swedish Government were unable, and at heart unwilling, to stamp out. An acute diplomatic correspondence ensued which, a few weeks after Bernadotte's arrival at Stockholm, culminated in an ultimatum from Napoleon requiring Sweden to declare war against England or to face the alternative of war with France.

This ultimatum placed the newly elected Crown Prince in a very difficult position. It was laid before the Council of State on the occasion of his first attendance at its meetings. Pleading his inadequate knowledge of the interests and resources of Sweden and his desire that no personal consideration affecting himself should influence the judgment of Council, he asked and obtained leave to retire, and to return after they had arrived at a decision. The Council of State advised the King to comply with the demands of the Emperor, and the King, under duress from Napoleon, declared war against England.

England, recognising that the declaration of war had not been a voluntary act, took the sensible course of ignoring it. Accordingly the state of war between Sweden and England became so unreal as to be farcical. Alquier reported to Napoleon that "They are laughing at the declaration of war in London, and I have even detected them smiling at it in Stockholm."

Meanwhile the Crown Prince wrote letter after

letter^a to Napoleon pointing out the disastrous effect of the commercial blockade upon Swedish prosperity, and the fatuous impolicy of the declaration of war against England. In the following passage he alluded to the painful position in which the Emperor's attitude towards Sweden was placing him :

" When I decided to accept the succession to the throne of Sweden, I hoped, Sire, that I should be able to reconcile the interests of the country which I had faithfully served and defended during thirty years with those of the country which had just adopted me. Scarcely had I arrived when I saw that hope destroyed."

But Napoleon declined to enter into a personal correspondence with Bernadotte, excusing himself upon the pretext that he discussed State affairs only with sovereigns or through diplomatic channels, and not with Crown Princes.

The blockade became a notorious nullity. A contraband trade continued with England, and the policy of Napoleon became every day more and more irreconcilable with the independence and the prosperity of Sweden. When the English merchantmen paid their annual visit to Swedish waters in the summer of 1811, they found no difficulty in evading a blockade which was ineffective because it was injurious to Swedish interests, and repugnant to Swedish opinion. Napoleon, hearing that English commerce was penetrating into Europe through Swedish ports, wrote an angry protest^b to Baron Alquier, his Minister at Stockholm, whom the Crown Prince was striving to keep in good humour by

^a Letters of 19th November, 9th December and 19th December, 1810.

^b *Corr. de Napoléon*, 17916, 17936.

lending him his summer palace, and by making him the object of royal attentions.

Then there arose a diplomatic storm in Stockholm which resulted in the downfall of Baron Alquier, who wrote an intemperate note to the Swedish Foreign Minister, imputing treachery and falsehood to the Swedish Government and prophesying for the present dynasty the fate that had recently befallen the Vasas. Bernadotte, who happened to be acting as Regent, dictated a stinging reply :

" The climate of this country," wrote the Foreign Minister, " may doubtless disagree with you : and you may have formed a wish to seek another destination ; but it was disloyal of you to provoke your removal by making assertions that are utterly groundless. . . . Those, who are capable of the culpable design of provoking discord, will always end by being unmasked."

Alquier refused to accept this scathing note, and demanded an audience, at which the Prince Regent complained that the French Minister was envenoming the relations between Sweden and France and was misrepresenting his actions to the Emperor. Alquier retorted by reproaching the Prince with favouring England at the expense of France. The Prince pointed to the painful and humiliating position in which Napoleon's policy was involving him, and closed his interview, in true Gascon fashion, with a declaration that " sooner than suffer dishonour, he would prefer to seek death at the hands of his grenadiers, or plunge a dagger into his heart." At this moment Prince Oscar entered and Bernadotte, taking him in his arms, asked him if he would follow his father's example. " Yes, papa," said the child, upon which the Prince Regent turned to Alquier and exacted from him a promise that he would give the

Emperor a verbatim report of their interview, and of all that he, Bernadotte, had said.*

Napoleon, recognising that Alquier had brought upon himself these rhetorical avalanches by the initial mistake of writing an insolent note to the Swedish Minister, removed him from Stockholm, ordering him to exchange places with the French Minister at Denmark, whom he instructed to avoid interviews with the Prince and to communicate only with the Swedish Foreign Minister.^b

During the year 1811 Napoleon continued to enforce the continental blockade in a manner which offended Swedish pride and contravened Swedish independence. His cruisers entered the Baltic, and carried on a campaign of piracy in Swedish waters, confiscating the cargoes of coasting ships, and impressing their crews into the French service. These proceedings were followed up by threats to occupy Swedish Pomerania, and to place Customs Officers, and to "press-gang" sailors, in the Swedish ports. He could not have treated the Crown Prince's adopted country more contemptuously if she had been an enemy or a conquered province.

The Emperor's only proposal for the mitigation of the evils of the blockade of England, was to offer to Sweden twenty millions' worth of colonial produce, as compensation for the loss of English products. This plausible offer was wholly illusory, because it was accompanied by stipulations for a naval offensive against England, for a contingent of at least 30,000 men to aid the Emperor against Russia, as well as by financial conditions which robbed it of any possible advantage to Sweden.

It was becoming obvious in the winter of 1811

* Alquier's despatches of August 1811; Geoffrey, 566.

^b *Corr. de Napoléon*, 18233, 17916, 17936.

that Napoleon's policy was calculated to embroil him sooner or later with Bernadotte. Nevertheless, there was as yet no definite breach in the friendly relations between the two Governments. Bernadotte was sincerely anxious to preserve the French Alliance. From time to time he sent Napoleon useful information which had reached him from his agents in England and elsewhere. Courtesies were exchanged on the occasion of a birth of an heir to Napoleon's throne. Bernadotte sent the order of the Seraphim to the infant King of Rome, and he received from the Emperor a ring containing portraits of the French Imperial family.*

* Pingaud, 137-138; Sarrans, I. 219-228.

CHAPTER III

THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE CZAR

OCTOBER 1810—DECEMBER 1811

SWEDEN and Russia were geographical neighbours and historic enemies. Finland, which had been a bone of contention between them for centuries, had been snatched from Sweden by Russia with Napoleon's help in 1809. Its recovery had become the aim and the rallying cry of the National Party in Sweden. It was natural that they should expect the ex-marshal of France to lead them in a campaign of *revanche*.

Before leaving Paris Bernadotte had made up his mind never, if he could prevent it, to allow Sweden to embark upon such a mad enterprise. In the presence of diplomats and courtiers he was heard to say :

" I know the thorny path on which I am entering. I have been chosen by a small party, not for my *beaux yeux*, but because I am a general, and with the tacit understanding that I am to reconquer Finland. But to undertake a war with that object would be a folly, to which I shall not lend a hand."

A glance at the map of Northern Europe will explain why Bernadotte refused to entertain such a project. Finland was separated from Sweden by more than a hundred miles of sea, and was bounded for nearly a thousand miles by Russian territory.

He was essentially a prudent, peace-loving man, having been well described by Admiral Verhuell as one who "without liking war knew how to make it."^a He recognised that, if Finland could ever be regained and held by Sweden, it could only be at the ruinous price of a perpetual state of war and of a continuous maintenance of armaments.

The impolicy of such a design as the reconquest of Finland was further demonstrated soon after Bernadotte's coming to Sweden when he was acting as Regent during the King's illness. A mobilisation of troops, which had been authorised by the Swedish Diet as a matter of precaution, was met with outbreaks of revolt in various parts of the Kingdom. The Prince, who was a past-master in the art of dealing with military mutinies,^b showed that his hand had not lost its cunning. He harangued deputations from the disturbed districts in stern and patriotic language, and then led them to the bedside of the old King to receive pardon and clemency. The anti-mobilisation movement subsided, but the incident served to strengthen and to justify the Prince's objection to a policy which would involve the continuous maintenance of a large standing army.

The Czar, Alexander I, who was a very well-informed potentate, with agents and spies everywhere, quickly became aware of Bernadotte's pacific intentions upon the subject of Finland. Accordingly he seized the first opportunity that presented itself of cultivating friendly relations with the new Crown Prince of Sweden. The opportunity occurred when a request reached him from Napoleon that he should put pressure upon the King of Sweden to

^a *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 296.

^b *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 77.



ALEXANDER I., CZAR OF RUSSIA.

induce him to adhere more effectively in the blockade against England.

The use which Alexander made of this opportunity affords an excellent illustration of the depths of duplicity to which the sovereigns of Europe found it necessary to descend in order to elude Napoleon's oppressive foreign policy. With the ostensible object of complying with Napoleon's request and of admonishing the Swedish King to persevere in the blockade of England, the Czar sent a trusted emissary to the Swedish Court. This was Colonel Czernitchef, whom he employed on many confidential missions of diplomacy or espionage. At the same time he gave him secret instructions to inform Bernadotte that the admonition was a mere pretence, and that Russia was just as much opposed to Napoleon's Continental System as Sweden was.

Czernitchef arrived at Stockholm at the beginning of December, and, after delivering his formal admonition to the King, proceeded to carry his real message to the Crown Prince, who gave him a private audience at which was laid the first stone of an enduring Alliance between Russia and Sweden.*

Czernitchef lost no time in explaining away the Czar's pretended remonstrance, and in assuring the Prince that, if Sweden was desirous of trading with England, Russia would not place any obstacle in her way. Bernadotte, who appeared to be delighted and relieved of a weight of anxiety by this announcement, then proceeded to unburden himself to the Russian emissary. He depicted the cruel and embarrassing situation in which Napoleon had placed him, and the torture which it caused him to be prevented from repaying Sweden for the confidence which she had reposed in him. He referred with bitterness

* Geoffrey, 553-555 ; Vandal, iii. 513-520.

to his own services to Napoleon on several critical occasions and to the evil destiny which had made him "his subject instead of his comrade." He declared that he had never stooped to be the servile instrument of Napoleon's despotic humour, and that he certainly would not yield to his capricious commands when a valorous nation had honoured him by choosing him as their chief. Czernitchef, in his report to the Czar, described the dramatic expression, the animated gesture, the inflated diction, the Gascon accent, which accompanied the torrent of the Prince's conversation. The interview lasted two hours, and ended in a statement by the Prince to the effect that Russia might be assured that he had become wholeheartedly "a man of the North."^a

Meanwhile Alquier, the French Minister at Stockholm, unconsciously played into Czernitchef's hands. He took every opportunity of rudely emphasising the arbitrary attitude which the French Emperor insisted upon maintaining towards Sweden. He ostentatiously accentuated Napoleon's *langage de maître*. He admitted that the Continental System was ruinous to Sweden, yet declared that Napoleon's will must prevail. Knowing nothing of Czernitchef's real mission, he boasted everywhere that the Czar's Aide-de-Camp had come to force the recalcitrant Swedes to come to Napoleon's heel. He patronisingly described the Crown Prince as "a good fellow," not wanting in ability, who possessed "a volcanic Southern temperament; an impulsiveness that made him the weather-cock of every wind, and with not enough force of character to enable him to dominate a difficult situation." He went on to sneer at the Swedes as a conceited and extravagant people, "the Gascons of the North." All these

^a Vandal, *Napoleon et Alexander I*, 513-520; Geoffrey, 554.

observations were reported to Bernadotte. Czernitchef, at their next interview, found him more fixed than ever in his declaration of friendship towards Russia, and more bitter than ever in his complaints of the ingratitude and harshness of Napoleon. The Crown Prince declared that he would prefer to end his career honourably than to witness the degradation of the nation which had chosen him to govern them.

Czernitchef, during his stay at Stockholm, had an opportunity of observing Bernadotte's behaviour at military reviews and court functions. He reported to the Czar that he recognised in the Prince the same brilliant General whom he had seen in the campaign of 1809 among his troops on the banks of the Danube. "There was the same martial air, bright eye, well-knit figure and hair floating in the wind." What struck him most in Bernadotte was the perfect ease with which he played his new part. Czernitchef perceived "nothing of the *parvenu*, not a movement that was incorrect or out of place." With a quiet dignity he inspected his troops, and received the homage and acclamations of the people, as if he had been all his life exercising the duties of a Sovereign. He was also struck by the respectful deference with which he treated the King.

Alexander wrote without delay (19th December) to Bernadotte thanking him for the reception which he had given to Czernitchef and adding a postscript in his own hand of the most flattering description :

"Having acquitted myself of my duties towards the Crown Prince, allow me to address myself to the man who is distinguished by his talents, his character, and his principles. I desire not only your friendship but also your confidence ; I wish for them because my esteem for you is of long standing, and dates from

the time when you were only a General. Brought up myself a Republican, I have the happiness to value the man more than his titles. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by the fear of Russia with which people will try to impress you. The interest of Russia is bound up with the preservation of Sweden."

To this advance Bernadotte responded :

" Yes, Sire, I shall be the friend of your Majesty, since you deign to say that you wish it with all your heart."

A remarkable man who contributed to a *rap-prochement* between Bernadotte and Alexander, was a great Finnish noble, Count Armfeldt. He had no bias for Bernadotte. On the contrary, his sympathies with the dethroned dynasty had led to his becoming a nationalised Russian, with the result that he was exiled from Sweden and struck off the roll of the Swedish nobility. Armfeldt was in Stockholm in the winter of 1810, and had several interviews with the new Crown Prince, of whom he has left the following impression, written in November a few weeks after his arrival :

" I have seen Bernadotte three times *tête-à-tête* and in private," wrote Armfeldt. " He is a man who, with an entirely military exterior, is a man of sense and of courage, who understands very well the great difficulties which surround his position. To begin with, there can be no doubt that he is firmly resolved to remain King of Sweden and to assure his throne to his family—an object which, however ridiculous it may be from the point of view of Sweden, is a very natural one from his point of view. It is difficult of attainment, but is it impossible? No; and the means which he is employing are the only ones by which he can possibly accomplish it. In the first place, he is a brave and tactful soldier, who

adopts the tone of comradeship with every military man. His first words with me were, 'General Armfeldt, there is nobody here but General Bernadotte; let us talk like comrades.' That kind of thing goes a long way with soldiers, treated as they have been with indifference by the late King Gustavus, who was suspected of disliking the noise of the firing line. To civilians he speaks of constitutional rights, of the power of the four Orders in the State, and of his desire to bow scrupulously to their will. Whether he means it or not, he says it in a way that pleases his hearers. He knows that the war against England is a hateful war in every way, and that all parties detest it. To obtain popularity, he is obliged to favour in every way the contraband trade with England. Sooner or later this will infuriate Bonaparte, with the result that Bernadotte will himself become infuriated, because he is not patient under injury."*

Count Armfeldt, indeed, went so far as to suggest to Alexander the idea of inducing the Prince of Sweden to undertake the command of a Russo-Swedish army.

Thus it came about that, within a few months of his landing in Sweden, Bernadotte had been drawn towards the Czar by their common objection to the tyranny of the Continental System, and by his own wise resolve not to condemn his adopted country to a hopeless struggle for the recovery of Finland. This *rapprochement* with Alexander did not involve him in any break with Napoleon, who, at this period, was loud in his declarations of undying friendship for the Czar, and of his earnest wish for the maintenance of peace with Russia. Nevertheless, Napoleon's policy did not accord with his protestations. He exasperated the Czar by adding to his empire the Hanseatic towns which Alexander used to describe

* F.O. Sweden, 27th August, 1811.

reverentially as "the holy Trinity of the Northern Seas," as well as by setting up Poland as an anti-Russian buffer. He wounded the Czar's pride by annexing Oldenburg, which was nominally a sort of fief of the Russian Crown. As the year 1811 wore on, Alexander began an ominous concentration of troops near the Polish frontier ; Napoleon responded by quietly reinforcing his eastern garrisons. The outbreak of war between France and Russia threatened to become a mere question of time.

CHAPTER IV

THE CROWN PRINCE PINS HIS DESTINY TO THE ACQUISITION OF NORWAY

1810-1811

ALTHOUGH he had definitely resolved not to provoke an endless quarrel with Russia, Bernadotte was well aware that he was expected to win for Sweden something that would recompense her for the loss of Finland and would be worthy of his own reputation. He quickly made up his mind that the best solatium that he could offer would be to create a united Scandinavian peninsula by taking Norway from Denmark and adding her to Sweden.

The idea of annexing or uniting Norway to Sweden was not a new one ; but it was traditionally weak and excited no enthusiasm. The national aspirations pointed whole-heartedly and unmistakably towards Finland. Nevertheless, Bernadotte was not discouraged. He resolved to divert public opinion from Finland and to direct it towards Norway ; and, with that object, he set himself to persuade and to educate a nation which, from the King downwards, was predominantly against him. He argued that to create a compact peninsula was to inaugurate an era of peace, and that to bring about a prolonged state of war with Russia was " to put on a Nessus' shirt." It was a remarkable achievement for this military adventurer to come as a stranger among a people whose language he did not understand, and to force upon them a comparatively

pacific policy, which differed widely from their passionate preconceptions. There were sentimental as well as political reasons impelling him in this direction. Readers of *Bernadotte: The First Phase*^a will remember that, when he was serving in the Revolutionary army, one of the catch-words on the lips of every French soldier was the phrase "natural boundaries," which embodied the doctrine that a country should be surrounded by seas, mountains, or rivers. For France the natural boundaries were the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Atlantic Ocean; and, with this motto for an inspiration, General Bernadotte had fought half a dozen campaigns. The old ideal of "natural boundaries" now resumed its sway over his maturer mind as completely as in the days of his early manhood. It seemed to him that the addition of Norway to Sweden would be a striking application of the principle, because Nature herself had bounded a Scandinavian peninsula by the sea on the east, the south and the west. The idea of being monarch of a sea-girt Kingdom captured Bernadotte's imagination. Before he had been three months in Sweden he had formed the fixed determination to pin his destiny to the acquisition of Norway.*

At this period Bernadotte desired and hoped to be able to preserve amity with France. So he invited the French Minister, Alquier, to an interview at which he complained that Napoleon's policy towards Sweden had alienated her from France, and he indicated that the only way of winning her back was to give her some territorial compensations. Then, unrolling a map, he pointed to Scandinavia and said, "You can see what would suit us." "I can see,"

* Pages 46, 123.

^a *Lettres et Discours de Charles-Jean*, 33, 26th May 1811.

said Alquier, "that Sweden is rounded symmetrically on all sides except on the side of Norway. Is it Norway that Your Royal Highness wishes to speak of?" "Yes," said Bernadotte, "it is Norway." He then suggested compensations for Denmark, and held out hopes that, if Napoleon would assist him to procure Norway, he might be able to bring a Swedish army to his imperial standards.* Alquier sent to Napoleon a report of this interview, and advised him that, if he wished to bring Sweden and Norway into his system, the present was a favourable moment for effectuating that purpose. Napoleon's reply was a contemptuous *non possumus*. Norway belonged to Denmark; and it did not suit his book to make an enemy of Denmark. In any European campaign Denmark would be so near to his northern flank that, for strategic reasons, he could not afford to quarrel with her. His idea was to use Sweden for his own purposes in a manner that would have brought ruin and disaster upon that country. He contemplated a campaign against Russia with Sweden as an ally. Sweden was to be promised Finland as the price of her alliance; and, as a *quid pro quo*, he was himself to annex Swedish Pomerania to the French empire. But, fortunately for Sweden, Bernadotte had made up his mind not to involve his adopted country in a war in which success would be even more calamitous than defeat.

Napoleon's attitude towards Bernadotte's proposals about Norway was expressed in his instructions to his Foreign Minister, the Duke of Cadore, dated 26th February:

"The project of acquiring Norway can be no more than a passing effervescence of the Prince

* Pingaud, 138, 139; Geoffrey, 557-561.

Royal's imagination. He deceives himself, if he supposes that Russia would consent to the transfer of that important province to her natural enemy. . . . Besides, so long as Denmark is the ally of France, the Emperor will not be a party to any attack upon her authority. . . . No notice need be taken of these overtures. The Emperor is too strong to have any need of the concurrence of Sweden. . . . You will say all this, and you will take care to preserve great dignity in your relations with the Prince. You will not speak to him about state affairs, but you will address yourself upon those topics to the King or to the Cabinet."

But it was Napoleon who "deceived himself." What he called "a passing effervescence of the Prince Royal's imagination" ripened into a Union of Kingdoms which lasted for a century. Russia not only "consented" to, but actively co-operated in, the transfer of Norway; and the Emperor was destined to learn that he was not "too strong to have any need of the concurrence of Sweden."

Napoleon made the mistake of underrating Bernadotte's statesman-craft and strength of purpose. He did not think him capable of carrying out such a far-seeing design as that of establishing his dynasty upon a basis of enduring peace. He did not suppose that the man whom he had always looked upon as a "wrong-headed Southerner" would be able to draw a northern nation away from their favourite dream of Finnish *revanche*, and to guide them along a safer and surer path.

The Emperor endeavoured to influence the Crown Prince by using the Crown Princess (not for the first time) as an intermediary with, and an involuntary spy upon, her husband. It was with this design that he encouraged her to follow her

husband to Stockholm.* Before the end of January 1811 the Prince was joined by his wife and by his son, who was in his twelfth year. The Princess was cordially welcomed by the King and by the populace; and Prince Oscar was proclaimed Duke of Sudermania.

Désirée's home was in Paris. After a few weeks at Stockholm she began to feel homesick. Her health suffered from the effects of a tempestuous voyage, and from the severity of a Swedish winter. Her French ladies-in-waiting became thoroughly discontented; and her life at Court seemed to her to be a gilded exile. Suddenly she packed up her belongings and returned to her beloved France.†

The departure of his wife increased the difficulties of Bernadotte's position by removing an intimate link with France. Another link was removed when the Emperor suddenly recalled some French aides-de-camp, who had accompanied him to Sweden. As a result the Prince was left alone in a strange land with no French companions except a few familiars the principal of whom was his foster brother Camps, whom he created a baron and a general. Camps was a native of Pau, and a Gascon like his master, of whom he used to speak to visitors as "we." A wit observed that "Camps will soon drop the Prince and speak of 'I.'" There was a French colony in Sweden, but it was anti-Napoleonic in its tone, and consisted of an incongruous medley of Huguenot refugees and Royalist *émigrés*.‡

Bernadotte availed himself of the departure of

* Pingaud, 139-140.

† For particulars about Désirée see chap. xxxiii.

‡ Among the Huguenots were Colonel Peyron and Consul-General Signeul. Among the Royalists were the Duc de Piennes, Count de Montrichard, and Count Suremain.

his aides-de-camp, to send a letter to Napoleon expressing his earnest desire to preserve the French alliance. The Emperor replied to his advances by sending him the unwelcome advice that a campaign for the recovery of Finland was his best way of winning popularity and of consolidating his position in Sweden. "Let him," said the Emperor, "go straight forward, and seize the first opportunity of winning military glory for his country. The Prince has all the qualities to play such a rôle. He knows how to command an army, and he will be able to accomplish great things."

Advice of this kind was thrown away upon Bernadotte, who did not despair of procuring Napoleon's adhesion to his plan for the acquisition of Norway. He endeavoured to stimulate the Emperor to action by hinting that he was receiving offers from other Powers, which his devotion to the Emperor would not allow him to accept. He even lowered his demands, and declared that he would be satisfied with the Northern Province of Norway, which consisted of the ancient diocese of Trondhjem. He pointed out that it was a poor and thinly populated district. Nevertheless, he declared that he "would prefer to receive a single tree from France than a whole forest from any other Power."

At this period the Crown Prince had three principal objects in view : namely, to win Norway if possible with the aid of France, but at all events to win Norway ; to keep on good terms with Napoleon without ruining the commerce of his adopted countrymen ; and to cultivate friendly relations with Russia and with England as the best guarantees of a permanent peace for Sweden.^b It was a prudent policy from his

^a Alquier's despatch, 30th March 1811 ; Pingaud, 139.

^b Geoffrey, 546.

own, and from the Swedish, point of view ; but it was one which, on that very account, was certain to embroil him, sooner or later, with the man of indomitable will and of tragic destiny who had ceased to regard any point of view save his own.

CHAPTER V

NAPOLEON VIOLATES SWEDISH TERRITORY—THE CROWN PRINCE TAKES UP THE CHALLENGE

JANUARY—JULY 1812

IN the winter of 1811 threatening clouds overhung the relations between Sweden and France, and created that kind of sky which "clears not without a storm." In January 1812 the storm broke, and the air was cleared. Suddenly Napoleon struck a deadly blow at Swedish pride and independence by ordering Marshal Davout to invade and to occupy Swedish Pomerania. He excused himself by pointing to his previous warnings and to the seizure by the Swedish Government of a French privateer which was preying upon Swedish merchant ships. But his real objects were to secure the safety of his left wing in the approaching invasion of Russia, and to close the Pomeranian ports to British commerce.

Marshal Davout took pleasure in promptly executing the Emperor's orders. Acting under his directions, General Friant, who had been one of Bernadotte's brigadiers in his early campaigns entered Pomerania, without any previous declaration of war, confiscated all the ships in Pomeranian harbours, levied contributions upon the inhabitants, disarmed and disbanded the Swedish garrisons, and proceeded to appropriate all the resources of the province to the Imperial Treasury of France.

The news of this grave act of aggression reached

Stockholm in February, and the Swedish Government did not hesitate for one instant as to the course which they should pursue. Bernadotte, who was acting as Regent, forthwith took up the challenge by despatching a special envoy to the Russian Court, and at the same time requesting the British Government to send a representative to Sweden with powers to negotiate. To the Czar Count Löwenhjelm was the bearer of a letter in which the Swedish Prince pointed out that the invasion of Swedish Pomerania was part of Napoleon's design of universal domination, to which he invited the Czar to offer a prompt and vigorous resistance.

"In the midst of this universal despair," he wrote, "the eyes of men turn to Your Imperial Majesty with confidence and hope. Allow me to remind Your Majesty that there is nothing comparable to the magic of the first instant. So long as strength lasts, success depends upon willingness to act. Those whose spirit is scared are incapable of reflection, and yield to the force which terrifies or attracts them."^a

The Czar replied in a courteous letter of 25th February in which, addressing Bernadotte as "my Brother and Cousin," he expressed a wish to meet him, thus foreshadowing the interview which afterwards took place at Abo. "I attach special value to Your Royal Highness's esteem," he wrote, "and I have a great desire to make your personal acquaintance." A few days afterwards he added very tactfully, "You will always find in me the friend who will emulate you, but will never be the jealous rival of your glory."^b

^a *Corr. d'Alexandre et Bernadotte*; *Meredith's Memorials*, 152.

^b *Corr. d'Alexandre et Bernadotte*.

This correspondence led to negotiations which proceeded simultaneously at St. Petersburg and at Stockholm, not without some misunderstandings as to aims and details, with the ultimate result that a treaty was concluded by which Russia gave a guarantee that Sweden should be placed in possession of Norway, and undertook to send a Russian army to Sweden, with the help of which the Prince was to force Denmark to give up Norway, and was then to debouch upon the French line of communications.* It was not until the end of May that these matters were definitely arranged.

Meanwhile, Napoleon failed to realise the disastrous character of the step which he had taken when he invaded Swedish territory. He cherished the illusion that, after casting off the Swedes, he could whistle them back "like a huntsman his pack" whenever he pleased. Accordingly, early in March, within six weeks of his violation of Swedish territory, he opened negotiations in Paris, through the Swedish Consul-General Signeul, with the Princess Royal of Sweden.

Désirée prudently asked for a written memorandum, which she obtained and enclosed in a letter to her husband of which Signeul was the bearer. It repeated the former offer of an alliance against Russia with Finland as its price, and insisted once more upon the maintenance of the blockade against English trade with a promise of illusory compensations.

To this communication Bernadotte replied by offering his mediation for the purpose of bringing about peace between Russia and France. Here we obtain a glimpse of the rapid and easy way in which the Crown Prince wrote his State documents. Having completed his letter, he asked Signeul his opinion of

* *Correspondance Inédite d'Alexandre et Bernadotte.*

it. Signeul said that it was excellent and dignified, but that it struck him as too cold to move the Emperor. Bernadotte, who was dressing in order to attend a council, said: "Very well. If you think it will help your mission, I will add a few lines. But let us make haste, as I have to attend the council." While folding his tie, he dictated the following passage, which afterwards was often quoted as his defence:

"Sire, one of the happiest moments I have experienced since I left France, was when I was assured that Your Majesty had rightly judged my sentiments by recognising with what pain I contemplated the sad prospect of seeing the policy of Sweden on the eve of being separated from that of France, unless I am to sacrifice the interests of the country which has adopted me and has reposed in me an unlimited confidence. Sire, although I am a Swede by the ties of honour, duty, and religion, my feelings still identify me with that beautiful France where I was born and which I have served faithfully from a child. Every event in my life in this Kingdom, and all the honours of which I am the recipient, remind me of that glory which was the principal cause of my elevation, and I do not disguise from myself the fact that Sweden in electing me wished to pay a tribute of esteem to the French people."^a

On receipt of this letter Napoleon advanced his bid for Bernadotte's support by offering him a large aggrandisement of territory in Russia and Germany, a magnificent subsidy, and a complete indemnity for all his former French fiefs and endowments.

When Signeul carried back these offers to Stockholm, Bernadotte indulged in some bitter comments on their futility and worthlessness. "Does he love

^a Stedingk, iii. 199-202.

me better than his brothers?" he remarked to Signeul. "He has dethroned Louis because he refused to be his docile prefect. Ask Joseph and Jerome the value of their regality." Nevertheless, he sent Signeul to Dresden, where Napoleon was holding a Court of tributary princes, with a note insisting upon the cession of Norway and foreshadowing the prospect of war as an alternative:

"If Napoleon refused Norway, let him beware. Bernadotte would leave 40,000 men to guard Sweden, and would then march wherever honour and destiny might call him. Although in that event it would be an honour to become the rival of the Emperor, since Pompey, in spite of defeat, gained no little glory, still he should always prefer the honour of being his friend."

Signeul reached Dresden at the end of May, to find that Napoleon had just started on his march to the Niemen, leaving behind him the Duke of Bassano, who forwarded Bernadotte's proposals to the army's head-quarters at Posen. Napoleon, when he saw that Bernadotte's *sine qua non* was Norway not Finland, said: "Let him march where both his countries call him. If not, do not mention him to me again." To a Russian emissary who came to him from the Czar Napoleon spoke rather wildly about Sweden and its Crown Prince: "As for the Swedes," he said, "it is their destiny to be governed by mad kings. Their King was mad. They changed him for another, Bernadotte, who promptly went mad, for none but a madman could, being a Swede, ally himself with Russia."

We have now reached the end of May, when the Russian negotiations had come to a definite conclusion. Whatever hesitation Bernadotte may have

harboured, so long as there was any danger that Russia might leave him in the lurch, all doubt and irresolution were now at an end. There was as yet no actual breach of diplomatic relations. He had not crossed the Rubicon, but he was standing on its bank with his face towards the river. "Although I am proceeding against my own birthplace," he said to the Russian envoy, Count Suchtelen, in July, "I know of no way of saving Europe, except the defeat of the monster."

CHAPTER VI

NAPOLEON INVADES RUSSIA, AND THE CROWN PRINCE MEETS THE CZAR AT ABO

JULY—AUGUST 1812

ON the 22nd June 1812 Napoleon crossed the Niemen and entered Russian territory. It is well known how he strove in vain to engage the enemy in a great battle, and how on each occasion the Russians retired just in time, while the Cossacks harassed his flanks. During this period, we find the Czar writing to Bernadotte :

" I am playing the waiting game and I am preparing to pursue a guerilla warfare after the manner of the Spaniards in the Peninsular War and to defend the fortress of Riga in the spirit of Saragossa."

On 28th July, when Napoleon, after five weeks, had reached the river Dwina, the Czar wrote to Bernadotte suggesting an interview.

" I beg Your Royal Highness to believe," he wrote, " that I have often wished for your presence in the midst of my armies to guide the operations of this mighty struggle with your eminent talents and your great experience. . . . I expect to be at St. Petersburg on the 20th, where I hope to receive Your Royal Highness's reply, and I shall go to whatever place your Royal Highness fixes as a rendezvous." *

Abo, which had become the capital of Finland

* *Correspondance Inédite d'Alexandre et Bernadotte.*



RING SENT BY NAPOLEON TO BERNADOTTE IN 1809.



CASTLE OF ABO, WHERE THE CZAR MET BERNADOTTE IN 1812.

since the Emperor of Russia had become her Grand Duke, was chosen as the rendezvous. The Czar had to travel nearly 400 miles from St. Petersburg, and on his arrival had to wait five days for his visitor. He had placed a Russian frigate at the disposal of Bernadotte, who, however, insisted in crossing the Baltic under the Swedish flag. When it was represented to him that this would involve delay, and that the Czar would be kept waiting at Abo, Bernadotte exclaimed, "Well, sir, the Emperor will have to wait. One who knows how to win battles is entitled to regard himself as the equal of kings." It was evident that the fires of Gascony had not been extinguished by the snows of Sweden.

The conference at Abo occupied three days. Its proceedings followed the precedents set by previous conferences between the Czar and Napoleon at Erfurt and at Tilsit. The Czar and the Crown Prince conversed freely, while their Ministers translated their conversations into a treaty and exchanged notes with each other. Alexander pressed Bernadotte to accept the command of his armies, but Sweden was not ready for such a proceeding, and the time was not ripe. Difficulties were encountered when either side was asked to make concessions or sacrifices; but (as was usual in the Napoleonic era), the negotiations ran comparatively smoothly when it was a mere question of despoiling other countries. Ultimately Russia agreed to guarantee Norway to Sweden, and for that purpose to land thirty-five thousand men in Sweden in the course of the following September and November to be at the Crown Prince's disposal for the conquest of Norway, and afterwards for the purpose of creating a diversion in Europe against Napoleon.

The terms of the treaty of Abo were less interest-

ing, and less important in their results, than the relations between the two principal treaty-makers. Their personal meetings and their conversations bore fruit in an Alliance which caused the overthrow of Napoleon and in a good understanding between Russia and Sweden which lasted beyond their lifetimes.

Alexander was pessimistic about the issue of the campaign, and was apprehensive that St. Petersburg would fall into the hands of the enemy. Bernadotte, on the other hand, had no doubt that the invasion of Russia was doomed to disaster.

"It has been," he exclaimed, "by the timidity of his foes that Napoleon has won his greatest victories. At Austerlitz and Wagram he owed his success to the irresolution of his enemies. In the present war with what reckless blindness has he acted! . . . As if bent on suicide, he has plunged into those immense solitudes five hundred miles from his frontiers, disregarding every warning, taking no account of the character of his enemy, of the restless impatience of Europe, of time, of space, of climate. It would be easy to take advantage of his mistakes. Napoleon, who is so brilliant and daring in attack, would not be able to carry out a retreat for eight days, and one defeat would be the signal of his ruin."

The Crown Prince then launched into a wild gasconade foreshadowing a magnificent diversion by which St. Petersburg would be saved, if it should ever be in danger. He (Bernadotte) would descend upon Brittany with two hundred thousand men and would march upon Paris. He would be received with open arms. His appearance would reawaken the old enthusiasms of the French Revolution chastened by time and by experience: "Every friend of liberty will grasp me by the hand, and the result in France

will be a constitutional monarchy, a republic, or—who can tell ? ” The Czar seized the opportunity of stimulating Bernadotte's ambitions and of giving them a direction and an aim. “ I will give you,” he declared, “ eighty thousand men for such an enterprise, and I shall see with pleasure the destinies of France in your hands ! ” Bernadotte replied that it would not be at the head of Russian troops or as the Czar's lieutenant that he could achieve such a result.

The notion of a descent upon Brittany never took any serious shape. But the Abo conference did not close without a tacit understanding that, if the choice of France should fall upon Bernadotte as successor to Napoleon, the Czar would be well pleased and would co-operate. The idea was that, in such an event, Prince Oscar should succeed to the throne of Sweden. The French diadem remained for nearly two years an *arrière-pensée* at the back of Bernadotte's mind, colouring his thoughts and sometimes influencing his actions. But it never was more than an *arrière-pensée*. He never allowed it for an instant to divert him from his main purposes, which were the acquisition of Norway and the firm establishment of his dynasty in Sweden.

There can be no doubt that Alexander sincerely entertained the intention of making Bernadotte King of France, if circumstances should render it possible. He had no conflicting aim or interest. He feared Bonaparte, he despised the Bourbons, and he shrank from the idea of a French Republic. A friendly, peace-loving soldier on the throne of France, and a long regency in Sweden under a boy King, would have pleased him and suited his plans better than any other possible solution of these dynastic problems. He went so far as to suggest

that Bernadotte should divorce Désirée, and should marry the Grand Duchess Catherine, the very Princess who had been refused to Napoleon as his second Empress. But Bernadotte would not listen to these proposals. He entered into a "family pact" with the Czar; but it was of a purely political character and was aimed at the maintenance of the Bernadotte dynasty.

In the course of these negotiations Bernadotte made a lasting impression upon the Czar by the prompt and gracious manner in which he yielded points upon which he might have reasonably insisted. When the Swedish diplomats were pressing for a territorial guarantee, Bernadotte, seeing the Czar's unwillingness to make any such concession, asked him whether his objection was that his doing so would be badly received by his subjects. The Czar replied in the affirmative. Bernadotte at once relinquished the claim, and declared that he would accept the Emperor's promise, and would rest absolutely satisfied with it.

At the close of the conferences Bernadotte reviewed the troops which the Czar had undertaken to place at his immediate disposal for the conquest of Norway. When the review was over, he astonished the Czar by turning to him and saying :

"I have reviewed the army which you offer me. They are splendid troops, the *élite* of your army. But you have more immediate need of them than I have. Wittgenstein is defending the line of the Dwina like a lion; but he requires reinforcements. Send him these 35,000 men."

The Czar thanked him effusively, but demurred, and asked him how he proposed to acquire Norway without them. Bernadotte declared himself ready to postpone his Norwegian enterprise.

"If you win," he said, "I shall have it sooner or later. I know you will keep your promises. If you lose, Europe will be enslaved. Every sovereign will hold his crown at the pleasure of Napoleon. Better to work in the fields than to reign under such conditions."

The promise to send Russian troops to Sweden was not cancelled but was only postponed. This postponement and the consequent release of 35,000 men for service at the front turned out to be a decisive factor in the operations against Napoleon. Alexander never forgot the handsome way in which Bernadotte renounced the immediate advantage which had just been secured to him by treaty. This incident did more than anything else to lay the foundation of a friendship which afterwards was sorely tried but was never shaken.

CHAPTER VII

THE FLAMES OF MOSCOW

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1812

ON their return to their respective capitals the Czar and the Crown Prince exchanged letters which deserve to be quoted as models for such ceremonial occasions :

" The instants which I passed with Your Majesty," wrote Bernadotte, " and our interviews, have left upon my mind impressions of which it will always retain the recollection. I desire nothing more than the occasion of proving the sincerity of my sentiments towards Your Majesty, and I rejoice in the hope of seeing my wish soon realised."

The Czar's letter was to the same effect :

" I beg Your Royal Highness to believe," wrote Alexander, " that the moments which I passed with you at Abo have left behind them ineffable memories. A personal acquaintance has increased the esteem for you which has long inspired me, and is now united to a sincere friendship. To prove it will be the constant object of my desires."*

Behind these polite phrases lay a real *rapprochement* founded upon a community of interests, and upon the attraction which the personality of one finished actor usually possesses for another. The political alliance between Alexander and Bernadotte

* *Correspondance Inédite d'Alexandre et Bernadotte*, 28, 29 ; Letters of September 1812.

would never have survived if it had not been for the under-current of personal good feeling and understanding which flowed from their meeting at Abo.

During the remainder of 1812 more than a dozen letters passed between the Czar and Bernadotte. They related mainly to the Russian campaign, which reached its turning-point when Napoleon entered Moscow on September 14th and its catastrophe when he returned to Paris in December leaving his prestige and half a million men behind him in the steppes and snows of Russia. The Czar's letters contained several of those inexactitudes which seem to be characteristic of the war news of every age. For example, we find him representing the battle of Borodino as a signal success for his armies, ascribing the fall of Moscow to the failure of the Russian Commander to take full advantage of *la belle victoire*, and attributing the burning of Moscow to fiendish barbarity of the invader.

Bernadotte's replies were full of confident advice and encouragement. At the outset he wrote, in reference to the opening manœuvres :

"Whatever the result of them may be, Your Majesty must not be alarmed. It is possible that Napoleon may win the first, the second, even the third battle, and that the fourth may be indecisive. Nevertheless, if Your Majesty perseveres, you will inevitably win the fifth."^{*}

He sometimes sprinkled his arguments with classical parallels, of which the following is a characteristic sample :

"Rome sent an army to Africa in order to drive Hannibal out of Italy ; and Mithridates, in the hour of defeat, clung to the hope of sending an army to Rome to demand peace from the Senate. If Your

^{*} *Corr. Inédite*, etc., 27.

Majesty is able to place at my disposal the promised army, the Emperor Napoleon, even if he should occupy St. Petersburg and Moscow, will be obliged to come in person before the month of May in order to defend himself on the banks of the Elbe and the Weser."^a

The fall of Moscow created a tremendous sensation everywhere in Europe, and not least at Stockholm, where the representatives of all the Powers agreed in looking upon that event as the successful culmination of another Napoleonic campaign. The Crown Prince of Sweden alone dissented, and declared that from that moment the invaders were ruined. He was heard to say to the Austrian envoy, Count Neipperg: "You can tell your Emperor that Napoleon is lost, although the taking of Moscow may seem the most brilliant event in his military career."^b

In the same sense he wrote to the Czar, on receipt of the bad news, that it was manifest to him that

"Napoleon must be beaten in the end, because Your Majesty's armies can repair their losses, and must always hold the superiority in numbers, while his armies are at such a distance from their base that they cannot possibly count upon receiving reinforcements from Poland or from the interior of Germany."

At last, on the 17th December, Bernadotte wrote that he regarded the campaign as at an end, and received a reply from the Czar that Russian territory was cleared of its enemies.^c

After the fall of Moscow the Czar began to excuse himself from sending the promised army to Sweden,

^a *Corr. Inédite*, etc., 35.

^b Madame de Staël, *The French Revolution*, chap. iv.

^c *Corr. Inédite*, etc., 53, 55.

and, as a result, the relations between the Russian and Swedish Foreign Officer became strained. In the course of the diplomatic dispute which ensued Bernadotte more than once showed his teeth. For example, in October he sent, through the Swedish Minister at St. Petersburg, the following defiant message to the Russian Foreign Office: "I have not thrown off the yoke of France for the purpose of submitting to the yoke of any other Power on earth."* But, when the French retreat became a rout, the breeze between Russia and Sweden died away, and the correspondence between the Czar and Bernadotte in 1812 bears no trace of any serious misunderstanding.

The spring and early summer of 1812 were spent by Bernadotte at Orebro, where the Diet was holding its session. Here he was visited by a crowd of open or secret enemies of Napoleon. Among them was the Prince of Orange, whose dominions Napoleon had appropriated. From Russia came three agents, their envoy, Count Suchtelen, Count Czernitchef, of whom we have already heard, and Count Pozzo di Borgo, of whom we shall hear again. From London came Englishmen representing all the British services, diplomatic, naval and military, Lord Cathcart and Edward Thornton, Admiral Bentinck and General Hope. Austria was represented by Count Neipperg (the same who was destined to succeed Napoleon in the affections of the Empress Marie Louise), and Prussia by Count Gneisenau, who told everyone in confidence that the Prussian alliance with Napoleon was due to *force majeure*, and that they were only waiting for an opportunity of overthrowing the tyrant of Europe. To Orebro came also one day young Viscount Alexis de Noailles to plead the cause of the Bourbons, and was received so graciously and

* Lafosse, ii. 315.

politely that he reported to the exiled Prince that, if Bernadotte was not their friend, he was at all events the enemy of their enemies.

One of the fruits of this gathering of foreign notabilities was the conclusion of peace between Sweden and England. Swedish harbours were reopened to English commerce, and France was notified that Sweden would henceforth consider herself in a state of neutrality between France and England.

The meeting of the Diet passed off successfully. Bernadotte communicated the nature of the pending negotiations with Russia and England confidentially to the Council of State, and managed things so well as to procure from the Swedish Diet a veritable *carte blanche* for his foreign policy. As he walked away one day from the Council he was heard to say to the old King, who was leaning on his arm, "The Emperor Napoleon has reigned too many years as the tyrant of all nations. We have endured his pin-pricks too long."

CHAPTER VIII

THE WINTER OF 1812

Soon after the Prince Royal's return from Abo to Stockholm an interesting visitor arrived in that capital. This was Madame de Staël, the celebrated authoress of *Corinne*, accompanied by her second husband, Rocca, her two sons, and her daughter Albertine.* Her entry was semi-triumphal. When the Russian envoy politely offered his services, she tore up his letter, declaring that she did not require a foreigner's introduction at Stockholm, being the widow of a Swedish baron and an intimate friend of the Prince Royal. She was not disappointed in these expectations. Bernadotte gave her such a cordial welcome that she became, and remained throughout the winter of 1812 and 1813, the lioness of Stockholm society.

In return for these attentions, Madame de Staël loaded the Crown Prince with flattery and praise, the sincerity of which is attested by her private correspondence. To the Duchess of Weimar she described him as "the true hero of our age, because he unites virtue and genius, which in these degenerate days seem to have been divorced." "Never," she wrote to Camille Jordan, "have such eminent qualities been found linked with gentleness and a charm which sets the heart at ease." No wonder that, for several months, the salons of the Swedish capital

* Afterwards Duchesse de Broglie.

were ruled by this clever woman whose cosmopolitan accomplishments earned for her the description of being "Swiss by origin, French by adoption, Swedish and Italian by her marriages, English in her political ideas, and German in her literary tastes."

It was at this period that she published her monograph on "Suicide" and dedicated it to Bernadotte. Her dedication deserves attention, as it is a fair example of the extravagant adulation of which this remarkable man was the object from those who admired him.

After declaring :

"My children and I, like Arab shepherds in the desert when they see a storm approaching, have sought shelter under your laurels," she proceeded: "Until to-day I had dedicated my works to the memory of my father alone. I have applied to you, Monseigneur, to have the honour of doing homage to you, because your public life exhibits to all eyes those genuine virtues which alone deserve the admiration of reflecting minds. Among brave men you are specially distinguished for dauntless courage, but that courage is directed by a no less sublime benevolence. The blood of warriors, the tears of the poor, even the fears of the weak, are the objects of your humane providence, and the exalted rank in which you are placed will never be able to efface sympathy from your heart. A Frenchman used to say that you combined the chivalry of republicanism with the chivalry of royalty. Indeed, wherever generosity can operate it is ever in you an inborn quality. . . . Duties never seem to be a burden to you, but rather a staff ; and it is for this reason that your habitual deference to the wisdom and experience of the King adds a further glory to the power with which he entrusts you. If you persevere, Monseigneur, in the career which offers you so splendid a future, you will demonstrate to the world something which it has unlearned, namely, that

those heroes are really noble who, far from looking down upon the rest of humanity, only think themselves superior when they can sacrifice themselves for others."

Madame de Staël was in the eighth of her "Ten Years of Exile," and she was burning with wrath against Napoleon for having banished her. During her visit she plunged so boldly into the arena of politics that Bernadotte bantered her with the suggestion that she was qualifying herself for appointment to the Swedish Council of State.' It was she who invented the battle-cry of "The Liberties of Europe," which for her, so far as France was concerned, signified a constitutional monarchy with Bernadotte on the throne. Unkind people said that, in that event, she would never be satisfied until both Rocca and Désirée had been divorced, and "Corinne" had become Queen. On one occasion she declared her willingness to follow her hero to the field of battle. Bernadotte gallantly replied, "If I were Charles VII, I should be tempted to ask you to play the part of Joan of Arc. But the battle-field is no place for you. Give me your pen as an ally; it will be worth 50,000 men in the scale." She was fond of retailing the gossip of the Paris salons, which reached her from various correspondents. One of her stories was that Napoleon, after he had married the niece of Marie Antoinette, used to speak of "my uncle Louis XVI." "No," said Bernadotte, "he has too much pride ever to have said anything of the sort."

Among the foreign visitors in Stockholm during this eventful winter was Colonel Hudson Lowe, who was afterwards better known as Sir Hudson Lowe, and as the jailer of Napoleon. He was on a mission from the British Government to report upon the condition of the Swedish army. He had interviews

with the King, the Queen, and the Crown Prince. The following extracts from his Journal give us a glimpse of an evening in Stockholm during this winter season :

" We had the pleasure of dining with Madame de Staël yesterday. There, in a little theatre, Madame de Staël and her daughter went through some of the first scenes in Racine's *Iphigenia*. The Prince Royal entered soon, darting a glance at the company as he saw them collected in groups at small tables in the different rooms, and then glided away unperceived. I have never seen so remarkable a countenance as that of Bernadotte. An aquiline nose of most extraordinary dimensions, eyes full of fire, a penetrating look, with a complexion darker than a Spaniard, and hair so black that the portrait-painters can find no tint dark enough to give its right hue ; it forms a vast dusky protuberance round his head, and he takes great pains, I understand, to have it arranged in proper form."^a

Nothing could have more effectually contributed to stiffen Bernadotte's back for the approaching struggle, to excite his hostility to Napoleon, and to stimulate his vague ambitions than the eloquent conversation of this remarkable woman, counter-acting as it did the French sympathies which still permeated a section of the best Swedish society.

Under the spell of the flattery which was lavished upon him by the Czar at Abo, and by Madame de Staël at Stockholm, Bernadotte now gave himself up to golden dreams of visionary greatness. He pictured himself liberating Europe, adding Norway to Sweden, and being called upon to exchange the crown of Gustavus Adolphus for that of Henri iv. Then would come a halcyon era in the history of humanity, in which his son Oscar would reign as

^a Forsyth, 104.

King of a happy and united Scandinavian peninsula, while he himself would sit on the throne of the country of his birth, as the guardian of a constitution by which the principles of the French Revolution were to be blended with the traditional splendour of the ancient monarchy.

Napoleon, during his retreat from Moscow, became aware of what was going on at Stockholm. In an address to his army he publicly reproached the Swedish Prince with having failed to support him, and with seeking to supplant him. "St. Petersburg," he declared, "was at the mercy of a small Swedish patrol. Yet Bernadotte does nothing save dream of making himself Emperor in my place."

CHAPTER IX

THE ALLIANCE WITH ENGLAND

DECEMBER 1812—MARCH 1813

THE Czar's failure to send the troops which he had promised drew no serious complaint from Bernadotte. He was in no hurry to take the field until Russia and Sweden had come to terms with England, from whom he expected to receive both financial assistance and naval co-operation. Great Britain's "alliance," he wrote to the Czar, "cannot be a matter of indifference to us. Besides the help which she can afford us, her fleet can create useful diversions." It now became the common object both of Alexander and of Bernadotte to negotiate an alliance with England which should include a subsidy for Sweden. The main obstacle was England's repugnance to being a party to the taking of Norway from Denmark. This repugnance was motived by considerations both of public morality and of expediency. A section of public opinion objected on moral grounds to the spoliation of Denmark. The British Cabinet nursed the illusion that Denmark might be won to the allied cause, and was unwilling, for reasons of expediency, to alienate her irrevocably.

Lord Castlereagh had already formed the opinion that Sweden might be a useful ally in the approaching conflict, both from its geographical position and (to quote his own words) from "the well-known military talents of the fortunate Prince who had obtained

direction of its affairs." At first he raised objections to the transfer of Norway ; but, after three months' correspondence with Stockholm, he modified his attitude.

In agreeing to the cession of Norway Lord Castle-reagh was mainly influenced by a series of despatches from Sir Edward Thornton, the British Minister at Stockholm, which described the difficulties of Bernadotte's position in very clear terms. He pointed out that the Crown Prince, having induced the Swedes to abandon their passionate predilection for the reconquest of Finland, and having thereby brought about an alliance with Russia, could not take the field unless he received some other boon for Sweden. The Swedish people would not follow him in an unpopular war without the prospect of some substantial benefit. What he wanted was Norway, because it would give him a Scandinavian Kingdom encircled on three sides by the sea. Isolated within these natural boundaries, he looked forward to an era of peace. After discussing some alternative proposals, Thornton added : " Of this much, however, I must persist in constantly assuring your Lordship, that the cession of Norway, or perhaps its equivalent in the way above stated, is an indispensable requisite to the active co-operation of Sweden. The Prince will not, because I am morally convinced he cannot, act without it."

As the result of Bernadotte's persistence and of Thornton's representations a treaty was signed at the beginning of March between England and Sweden, under which Sweden undertook to contribute 30,000 men to an army which was to operate in North Germany under the command of the Crown Prince, while England undertook to concur in the union of Norway with Sweden, to pay a million a year to Sweden in monthly instalments as a war

subsidy, and to secure the possession of the West Indian island of Guadeloupe to the Swedish Royal House.

The Prince represented, as the basis of his co-operation, that France was not to lose her "natural frontier of the Rhine." Upon this point he was quite sincere, but he was cherishing an illusion if he thought that his allies would or could ever agree to remap Western Europe on lines which had nothing to recommend them, except that they had been the war-cry of revolutionary France when Danton was France and Bernadotte was a subaltern.^a

Castlereagh followed up the treaty by writing a personal letter to the Crown Prince which recognised that he was to be at liberty to deal with Denmark, if she should prove recalcitrant, before taking part in the general operations of the allies, and concluded in terms of glowing compliment :

"Entreating your Royal Highness to accept the tribute of my respectful good wishes for your personal glory and prosperity, in which I consider the best interests of the world to be at the present moment largely involved, I remain, with great deference and consideration, Your Royal Highness's most obedient and humble servant, CASTLEREAGH."^b

While these negotiations between Sweden and England were proceeding, the impending rupture between Sweden and France came to a head. For a long time the presence of a French Minister at Stockholm had been a cause of offence to Russia. But it was not until 20th December, that he received his passports and a strong hint to depart without delay. The French Government quickly followed

^a Sorel, viii. 100.

^b Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 372.

suit. In February 1813 passports were handed to the Swedish Minister in Paris, accompanied by a note, dated 13th February, in which Napoleon stated France's official case, and tried to sow dissension between Bernadotte and the Swedish people by reproaching the Swedes with "taking advantage of the success of their natural enemy to insult an ancient friend and an old and faithful ally," and by hinting that Sweden was being sacrificed to Bernadotte's ambition and "individual hatred," as well as to the momentary seductions of the Emperor of Russia.

This note reached Stockholm at the beginning of March. At about the same time Napoleon sent offers to the Crown Prince of money and territory, and even made a suggestion that some arrangement might be come to, according to which Napoleon should confine himself to the civil government of his Empire, with Bernadotte to command the armies of France in the field. Nobody who has studied Napoleon's life and character can suppose for one instant that he would have given practical effect to such a suggestion.

Bernadotte paid no attention to these illusory offers. He waited for ten days, and then issued his reply in the form of a letter addressed to Napoleon. In this letter he reminded the Emperor that it was to him that Sweden owed the loss of Finland, and that she could not believe in the sincerity of his friendship unless he was prepared to give Norway as a compensation. He pointed out that Napoleon's mad enterprise against Russia, which had been doomed to failure from the first, had caused the death of more than a million Frenchmen, and implored him to "sincerely embrace the idea of general peace, the violation of which has caused the shedding of so much blood."

He concluded with the following reply to the charges of personal hatred and ambition :

" I was born in that fair France which you, Sire, govern. Its glory and its prosperity can never be indifferent to me. But though I shall never cease to desire the happiness of France, I will defend with all my strength the rights of the people who have invited me to the succession of their throne, and the honour of the Sovereign who has deigned to call me his son. In state affairs, Sire, there is no room for personal affection or hatred, there are only our duties towards the people whom Providence has called us to govern. Concerning my personal ambition, it is great, I confess. It is an ambition to serve the cause of humanity and to ensure the independence of the Scandinavian peninsula. To accomplish these ends, I rely on the justice of the cause which the King has ordered me to defend, on the constancy of this nation, and on the loyalty of our allies. Whatever may be your determination, Sire, relative to peace or war, I shall not the less preserve towards your Majesty the sentiments of an ancient brother in arms."

Napoleon afterwards declared that he never received this letter. We know from the Castlereagh correspondence that Bernadotte showed it to Thornton, before despatching it. There can be no doubt that it reached Paris. It was easy for the Emperor to become acquainted with the contents of any letter without allowing it to be delivered to him by an official postman ; and the story runs that he ordered its bearer to be imprisoned, and that it was only by the intervention of Queen Julie of Spain that the unlucky courier ultimately obtained his release.*

At this point we come to the final break between Sweden and France, between the Crown Prince and

* Lafosse, ii. 28.

Napoleon. Who was to blame for that rupture? What judgment is to be passed upon the Ex-Marshal of the Empire for accepting the rôle of Commander-in-Chief in an alliance against Imperial France?

If Bernadotte had been born a Swedish Prince, his position would not be open to criticism, still less to blame. If so, was he not bound, as a Swedish Prince by adoption, to take up the position which it would have been his duty to assume if he had been a Swedish Prince by birth? If Napoleon had relaxed the Continental System in favour of Sweden, or had agreed to assist Sweden in obtaining the cession of Norway, Bernadotte might have been his ally. If Napoleon had not invaded Swedish Pomerania, Bernadotte might have remained neutral. But, in face of the invasion of Pomerania, the only alternative to a rupture with France was for Bernadotte to resign the post of duty and of honour which he had accepted upon the express understanding that he was to be free to take up arms against France. Nobody knew this better than Napoleon himself; he acknowledged it at St. Helena, when in a candid moment he said to Dr. O'Meara: "Bernadotte was ungrateful to me, for I am the author of his greatness; but I cannot say that he betrayed me. *He, in a manner, became a Swede, and never promised that which he did not intend to perform.*"

Some French writers have fallen into the mistake of attributing Bernadotte's differences with his native country to personal animosities or to the blandishments of the Czar. Napoleon was credited with having said, "It is not against France that Sweden takes up arms; it is Bernadotte who throws down the gauntlet to Bonaparte." Such a notion does not conform with reason or with history. Bernadotte would have worked with Bonaparte if it

had been made possible for him to do so. Napoleon made it impossible by insisting, as a condition of a French alliance, that Sweden should pursue a course which for her was subversive to peace, prosperity, and independence, and that Bernadotte, by adopting such a policy, should sacrifice both his duty to his adopted country and his prospect of the Swedish Crown.

PART II
THE WAR OF LIBERATION DOWN TO THE
DEFEAT OF NAPOLEON
MAY—OCTOBER, 1813

PART II

THE WAR OF LIBERATION DOWN TO THE DEFEAT OF NAPOLEON

1813

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CHAPTER X

THE EMBARKATION OF THE SWEDISH ARMY—THE MISSION OF COUNT POZZO DI BORGO

MAY 1813

At the beginning of May 1813 the Crown Prince left Stockholm in order to take command of his army which had been collected for embarkation at the Swedish port of Carlskrona. In a farewell proclamation he declared that he was "quitting his King, his son, and his companions in arms, not to trouble the repose of nations, but to co-operate in the great work of a general peace which sovereigns and nations had sighed after for so many years." This pacific purpose—at all events so far as Sweden was concerned—was amply fulfilled. The campaign upon which he was entering was destined to give to Sweden a peace which has continued until to-day.

The confident tone of the Prince's proclamation served to conceal many well-founded apprehensions. He had staked his fortunes, his popularity, his Crown, his everything upon the outcome of the approaching campaign and particularly upon the acquisition of Norway. He knew that he could expect no support for that enterprise from any of the foreign Powers except from those with whom he had treaty engagements—Russia and England. He knew also that he was taking a double risk. In the first place, the acquisition of Norway depended upon victory; in the second place, it was opposed in some quarters

because it involved the spoliation of Denmark. Accordingly, he became alarmed when he ascertained that both the Czar and Lord Castlereagh were angling for Danish co-operation in the approaching campaign.

While Russia and England were hunting the will-o'-the-wisp of a Danish alliance, it became necessary for them to keep Bernadotte in good humour, and to preserve his fidelity. As a first step in this direction the Czar sent, as his diplomatic agent to the Swedish head-quarters, one of the most remarkable men of that era. This was Colonel Pozzo di Borgo, whom the Czar created a Count and promoted to be a general.

Pozzo di Borgo was a Corsican, and as a child had been a playmate of the Bonapartes. Somehow or other, there sprang up between him and Napoleon one of those vendettas which seem to be indigenous in Corsica. A local legend traced their quarrel to a juvenile dispute over a bowl of soup ; but it is more probable that it arose at a later date out of the political convulsions of 1793 and 1794, when the Bonapartes nailed their colours to the Jacobin mast, while the patriot Paoli, with Pozzo di Borgo as his right hand, abjured the French Revolution and appealed for assistance to England. Pozzo di Borgo was President of the Corsican Council of State during the two years in which Corsica was a protectorate of Great Britain under the Vice-Royalty of Sir Gilbert Elliot.*

Pozzo, when the French had reoccupied Corsica, took refuge successively in England, in Austria, and in Russia. He was possessed of remarkable social gifts and of a striking personality. He displayed everywhere a consistency of purpose and a force of character which won for him a European reputation and led

* Afterwards first Earl of Minto.

the Emperor Alexander to employ him from time to time as one of his "roving diplomats." In all his wanderings he remained an ardent Corsican. As a Corsican he took a patriotic pride in Napoleon's genius because he regarded it as a native growth. But he hated the man. The great Emperor had few more dangerous enemies in Europe than this comparatively obscure companion of his childhood.

Pozzo di Borgo and Bernadotte were incongruous products of the age in which they lived. Pozzo was that *rara avis*, a cosmopolitan conservative. His conservatism was the crust of experience and of conviction. He was more Czarist than the Czar; and he had no sympathy with the republican soldier of fortune, who had won the inheritance of one throne and was dreaming of the reversion of another. His dislike of Bernadotte was cordially reciprocated; and the two men had no aim in common except the overthrow of Napoleon. Pozzo, when he writes about Bernadotte, is always a hostile witness.

Pozzo di Borgo was instructed to devote all his skill and energy to the task of persuading the Crown Prince to postpone his claims on Norway until the latest possible date and to co-operate forthwith with Russia and Prussia in crushing Napoleon. He found the Prince on 7th May at Carlskrona preparing to embark on the following day. Their interview lasted long into the night and had no result. The Prince mounted a high horse, declaring that he would not take the field against Napoleon until he had taken Norway from Denmark, and insisting upon being supplied with the Russian contingent which had been promised for that purpose. He reproached Russia with ingratitude for services rendered. "Was it not I," he exclaimed, "who counselled your master how to defeat his invaders? Was I not instrumental

in making your peace with Turkey? Did I not save your capital (when I was at Abo) by waiving my right to the Russian army which had been promised me? Have I not been the link which has brought Russia and England together?" Pozzo, in reply to this torrent of Bernadottian rhetoric, pleaded the urgent requirements of the emergency. But he pleaded in vain. The Prince remained unrelenting and unconvinced. Sweden had bargained to be paid in advance, and he was indignant at being asked to relinquish that advantage.

Pozzo di Borgo's first impressions of the Crown Prince were conveyed to the Russian Foreign Office in a confidential letter, which contained this interesting passage:

"You will be curious to know something about the Prince's personality. He certainly possesses distinguished qualities and talents. As he says himself, he has never been unlucky at war. But the discipline and training of the Revolution reveal themselves in his manners. Discussions with him are always lively and unmethodical. He speaks with eloquence, but without arrangement. *L'amour-propre* is displayed in every word. The sun never rises except by his advice. We spent the entire night in conversation. He mingles protestations of frankness and simplicity with a strong dose of *finesse* and boastfulness. When he perceived that I saw through him, he became natural and ended by speaking with emotion. He said 'If I do not obtain Norway and if I do not reap success, a violent death must be my destiny. I shall leave my son to the guardianship of Swedish honour. Even as a private individual he will have from his mother an honest independence.' In truth the Prince is on the gridiron [*sur la braise*]."

On the following day the Prince received an unofficial envoy of a different type and from a different

quarter. A Swedish officer, Colonel Peyron, came from Paris with a conciliatory message from Napoleon, which was to the effect that "the Emperor was ready to forget the past, if his ex-marshal would remain neutral and confine himself to occupying and defending Swedish Pomerania." Colonel Peyron was also the bearer of a letter from the Crown Princess, who advised her husband to pursue the same course from widely different reasons. Désirée pointed out that Napoleon was doomed to failure, and that, in that event, Bernadotte, if he remained neutral, would have the ball at his feet in France. "If you declare yourself against the French," she wrote, "you will lose the popularity which you enjoy among them. If Napoleon should fall, you might play a great rôle in France, and you might be the arbiter of a regency."

This was a favourite argument of Bernadotte's French correspondents. They played upon his French sympathies, and they strove to keep him aloof from the war, by reminding him that he was risking the loss of the esteem of his old compatriots. But Bernadotte was too far committed. He had put his hand to the plough, and could not look back. He had staked everything upon his alliance with England and Russia, and upon the acquisition of Norway for his adopted country. It was true that he had a second string to his bow. He had been encouraged by the Czar to indulge in what Frederick the Great once called "the most entrancing dream of a sovereign, that of being King of France." But, while he indulged occasionally in this pleasing day-dream, he never allowed it to divert his mind from the actualities of Swedish policy and of Swedish interests.

CHAPTER XI

THE DISEMBARKATION ON THE CONTINENT—AN ATMOSPHERE OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND SUS- PICION

MAY—JUNE 1813

It was on or about the 18th of May that the Crown Prince disembarked his army on the Continent and proceeded to reoccupy Swedish Pomerania, which had been for fifteen months in the possession of the French. He was met by plenty of bad news. Napoleon had gained the victory of Lutzen on 2nd May and was threatening to debouch from behind a strong line of fortresses which he held along the Elbe and to attack Berlin. The allied armies were in retreat, and there was no sign of the arrival of the Russian and German contingents which were to form part of his army. The Czar and the King of Prussia had appointed a governor of North Germany, thus weakening the Prince's authority in that part of Europe, in which he had been led to expect that he was to play the leading part. Still worse was the confirmation which reached him of the unwelcome intelligence that the allies were angling for a Danish alliance or neutrality, without stipulating for the cession of Norway to Sweden.

This avalanche of disquieting information obliged the Prince to modify his plans. He gave up the idea of an advance against Denmark, and he withdrew some regiments from Hamburg, excusing himself

to the Hamburgers by pointing out that a city like Hamburg could not be effectually defended in its streets. He cited his own successful assaults of several fortified places, and especially of Lübeck in 1806,* and he reminded the Senate of Hamburg how the redoubtable General Blücher had failed to save Lübeck from his attack. The Crown Prince's evacuation of Hamburg was doubtless a prudent and even a necessary step as part of a movement of concentration. But, as it was followed by the entry into the city of the French army, it created a disagreeable impression at the allied head-quarters, where it was represented as a withdrawal from co-operation.^b

During the months of May and June suspicions of the Crown Prince's fidelity began to be entertained at the allied head-quarters, and rumours were rife of the interchange of friendly communications between him and his former compatriots. An absurd story gained currency that the celebrated actress, Mademoiselle Georges, had carried a letter in her corsage from the Swedish head-quarters to Napoleon, who had read it and had muttered the words "Too late." There was a rumour of letters having passed between the Prince and his old comrade-in-arms General Vandamme, who was occupying the neighbouring Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg. The truth was that Vandamme had written about an exchange of prisoners and had broached some larger topics. The Prince had replied courteously about the prisoners, but had declined to discuss any other matters.

"So far as political questions are concerned," he

* *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 126, 127, 200; *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 148, 149, 165-71.

^b Benningsen, iii. 233; Sir R. Wilson's *Diary*, ii. 14.

wrote, "your purely military character does not permit me to discuss with you matters which concern exclusively our respective Governments. Sweden has been attacked, and the King, my Sovereign, has charged me with the duty of defending her."^a

It was also reported that Napoleon had instructed Fouché to write to the Crown Prince urging him to refrain from active operations against France. Fouché's letter, if it ever reached its destination, evoked no response and bore no fruit.^b

The allied Sovereigns paid no attention to any of these idle *canards*. They knew that, so far as any possibility of a *rapprochement* with Napoleon was concerned, the Crown Prince had burned his boats; and they had no anxiety upon that score. But they quickly became aware that the Prince was himself suspicious and discontented, and not without cause.

The Czar received an indignant letter from the Prince complaining of the non-arrival of the Russian troops which had been promised to him, and accusing the Russian Government of temporising with Denmark and of breaking faith with Sweden. He was heard to exclaim:

"The Emperor of Russia has betrayed me. The King of Prussia has betrayed me. They proposed to make me Emperor of the French; and they have repeated that proposal recently. At my age, after having witnessed so many revolutions, I prefer to seek a retreat in Lapland, yes, in Lapland, than to reign over a people that has suffered degradation. I want nothing, I am content with what I have, and, if necessary, I shall declare to Europe that I am retiring to Sweden with my army."^c

^a Vandamme, ii. 467.

^b *Memoirs of Fouché*, ii. 136-139; *Fouché*, par Madelin, ii. 244.

^c Pingaud, 199, 200.

To the Swedish King he wrote a few weeks afterwards :

" Up to the present England alone has kept her engagements. Russia has only sent me 4,000 horse, and the King of Prussia has not sent me a single battalion."

The Prince, as was his habit, talked wildly but acted prudently. He grasped the nettle of the negotiation with Denmark by adopting a wise and bold course which brought that matter to a head. He did not wish to be regarded by his allies as an obstacle to a *rapprochement* with Denmark, or to incur the blame and responsibility for the loss of a chance of help from such a quarter. So he contrived to bring about the despatch to Copenhagen of a quartette of diplomats representing the four allied nations so as to put the Danish intentions to the test. The sending of this mission had the effect of bursting the bubble of a Danish alliance. The King of Denmark declined to allow any of the four emissaries to land on Danish soil, and refused even to negotiate with them. When the four envoys returned from their fruitless mission the Prince wrote to the allied Governments pointing out in forcible terms the absurdity of supposing that Denmark could sever herself from Napoleon's cause, and again advising the occupation of the Danish peninsula.*

After this incident nothing more was heard from the side of the allies of patching up an alliance with Denmark ; and in a few weeks the Court of Copenhagen definitely declared itself on the side of Napoleon. In this way one of the Prince's grounds for anxiety was removed. But there remained another acute point of difference between him and his

* Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 389, 390.

allies. He had stipulated that Sweden was to acquire Norway before taking any part in a continental war. This was the price of her participation ; but it was now becoming daily more and more inexpedient, if not impracticable, for the allies to help him in such an enterprise. They had to fight a victorious French army led by the greatest soldier of the age, and they could not spare a man for any secondary purpose.

The Emperor Alexander could not afford to offend Bernadotte or to dispense with his help. So he again despatched Count Pozzo di Borgo with the object of reconciling the Crown Prince to the postponement of his claims on Norway. Upon this occasion Pozzo had better success than at his previous interview at Carlskrona. He was able to argue, with convincing force, that Napoleon's victories had changed the situation, and had rendered it necessary for the allies to modify their original plans and to present a united front. Bernadotte therefore abated his claims, and pressed for an interview with the Czar as a means towards a better understanding.

CHAPTER XII

AN ARMISTICE, A CONFERENCE, AND A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

JUNE—JULY 1813

HARDLY had Bernadotte been induced to consent to postpone his claim to the immediate acquisition of Norway when an event became known at his headquarters which had the effect of aggravating his worst anxieties and apprehensions. On 5th June an armistice was signed at Plessnitz, to be followed by a conference with the enemy at Prague, at which the only allied powers to be represented were to be Russia and Prussia.

Bernadotte was indignant at the non-inclusion of England and Sweden in the conclave. The reason of their non-inclusion was apparent. They had not yet taken the field. The conference was limited to the participators in the recent hostilities. But Bernadotte was committed to the alliance, and he was apprehensive that a peace might be patched up at Prague without due regard to the interests of Sweden. The seriousness and the reasonableness of his apprehensions is evidenced by the contemporary judgment of two competent observers, namely, Lord Wellington, who was engaged in driving Marshal Soult out of Spain, and Sir Edward Thornton, who was the British Minister at the Swedish headquarters. When Wellington was informed of the peace negotiations in Germany, he expressed a decided opinion that

Bernadotte had no sufficient guarantees for a peace upon such conditions as would be satisfactory to him.^a At the same time Thornton reported to Lord Castlereagh that there was a serious danger that the Crown Prince might lose interest in the campaign, that his confidence in the allies might be weakened, and that his enthusiasm for their cause might wane.^b

It was under these circumstances that, as a means of coming to a better understanding, the Crown Prince pressed for a personal interview with the allied Sovereigns. His wish was complied with, and the armistice was utilised for the purpose. He was invited to meet the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, during the temporary suspension of hostilities, in the Castle of Trachenberg in Silesia. The conference of Trachenberg turned out to be an eventful one, because it settled the plan of campaign which resulted in the overthrow of Napoleon.

The Crown Prince left Stralsund for Silesia on 6th July. He was paid extraordinary honours by the people of the territories through which he passed. On his arrival at the Castle of Trachenberg the Czar and the King of Prussia welcomed him as a member of the family of Kings and as one of the great captains of the age, with such cordiality that his ill-humour was quickly dissipated. He at once placed his twenty years' experience of French policy and strategy at the disposal of the allied Sovereigns. His advice was to wear down Napoleon by Fabian tactics ; to work up public opinion in Germany and France against his tyrannical projects ; always to refuse battle when the Emperor commanded in person, and to seize every opportunity of fighting and defeating his lieutenants. The conference, which lasted

^a Wellington's despatch, 4th August 1813.

^b *Castlereagh Despatches*, viii. 399.

four days, was entirely harmonious, and resulted in a convention embodying a concerted plan of operations. "The warmth of the great Gascon's manner," wrote Mr. Holland Rose, "cleared away the clouds." It is generally admitted that it was Bernadotte who dictated this plan of campaign,^a and that his personality was the guiding and cementing influence in the deliberations of the conference.

Good news was carried to Trachenberg by a courier from Spain who announced Wellington's victory at Vittoria. Almost simultaneously came a personal letter to the Crown Prince from the Emperor of Austria. "I learn," he wrote, "that you are on the Continent with your army in the ranks of the coalition. This intelligence has decided me to join the coalition, if the Emperor Napoleon rejects the peace which I have proposed to him." Fifteen years had passed since Bernadotte, as ambassador of the French Republic in Vienna, had demanded his passports from the same Emperor, and had left his capital amid scenes of excitement which nearly precipitated the outbreak of war between Austria and France.^b The whirligig of time had now brought them into the same camp.

The plan of Trachenberg contemplated the concentration of two armies—one in South Germany, which became known as the Army of Bohemia, and the other in North Germany, which was called the Army of the North. The Army of the North, which was to number one hundred and twenty thousand men, was to be under the independent command of the Crown Prince of Sweden. If Napoleon should

^a Lord Cathcart wrote to the Foreign Office from Trachenberg on 12th July: "The plan of campaign proposed by Bernadotte was agreed to."—F.O., 66-86.

^b *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 313-327.

attack either of these armies, the other was to fall upon his rear and his communications. Leipsic was named as the place where the final blow was to be struck. In a little more than three months the rendezvous was kept.

The Crown Prince was by no means satisfied with the arrangements for the distribution of troops. He claimed the command of half the whole army. The allied Sovereigns might have been willing to acknowledge his claim; but they were forced to yield to the objections of the Russian, and still more of the Prussian, generals. Marshal von Muffling, who was chief of the Prussian Staff, has left a record of this incident in his personal memoirs. He tells us that his colleagues, such as Generals Tauenzien and Blücher, were suspicious of Bernadotte's sincerity in the cause of the allies, and were annoyed at the idea, which seems to have been prevalent at Trachenberg, that Napoleon could never be defeated by strangers to his methods of warfare. "The Prussian generals," he writes, "were deeply wounded at the suggestion that they could not defeat Napoleon."^a They disparaged Bernadotte, who did not lie down under their cavils. He responded by recalling his own victories in 1806 over General Tauenzien at Schleitz, and over General Blücher at Lübeck.^b These resentments and jealousies were sources of friction throughout the remainder of the campaign.

On 13th July Bernadotte left Trachenberg for Stralsund, making a detour in order to avoid capture by the enemy. The task which lay before him in North Germany was no easy one. The position of his Swedish army was extremely hazardous. While Russia and Austria, in the contingency of a defeat,

^a Von Muffling's *Memoirs*, 56, 81.

^b *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 131, 165.

had their continental empires to retire to, the Swedes were separated from home by the sea, and had no place on the Continent to fall back upon except the dismantled fort of Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania. Their line of advance against Napoleon's army lay along an extended strip of territory flanked by half a dozen strong fortresses, while their communications with Sweden were threatened by the Danes and by the army of Marshal Davout, who had been placed in this position by Napoleon on account of his well-known enmity towards Bernadotte.^a "The Army of the Crown Prince," to quote the words of the Swedish Marshal Stedingk, "was encircled by the fortresses of the Elbe and of the Oder, by the sea, and by the army of Napoleon. At the same time Denmark was a double source of danger, because she joined forces with Davout at Hamburg, and menaced the southern province of Sweden."^b

The critics of the Crown Prince did not make sufficient allowance for the seriousness of the difficulties which surrounded him. He had need of the exercise of extreme prudence and caution, and if he had made a false step, the issue of the whole campaign might have been imperilled. In the midst of his perplexities he was encouraged by receiving a letter from Madame de Staël, from London, informing him that she had seen the Prince Regent, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Canning, and that they spoke in the highest terms of the Prince of Sweden. "English Society," she wrote, "has flocked to me ever since my arrival. But I regard Sweden as my country, because it is your fiery glance that is my fatherland. May God grant you victory in the approaching war!"

^a *Davout*, par Montagut, 200.

^b *Stedingk*, iii. 220, 221.

CHAPTER XIII

SIR CHARLES STEWART, GREAT BRITAIN'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE WAR OF LIBERATION

JULY 1813

Just before the Crown Prince's departure for Trachenberg a distinguished English soldier and diplomat had arrived at the Swedish head-quarters in the capacity of Great Britain's Representative in the War of Liberation. This was Sir Charles Stewart,* half-brother of Lord Castlereagh, who had recently been appointed British Minister to the Prussian Court. Besides his diplomatic duties at Berlin he had been charged, to quote his own words, with "the military interest of Great Britain in the North of Europe." This wide sphere of duty mainly centred in the surveillance and superintendence of the allied levies which were placed under Bernadotte's command.

England was, to a large extent, financing these levies and was furnishing them with materials and supplies. It was Sir Charles Stewart's duty to see that the Prince of Sweden gave full value for the large English subsidy which was being spent upon his army. It was a delicate task, because, from time to time, he was called upon to bring pressure to bear upon a commander-in-chief of great renown whose experience of campaigning in Germany and of Napoleonic strategy was unsurpassed. Perhaps, as indeed he afterwards admitted, he did not make

* Afterwards third Marquess of Londonderry.



GENERAL SIR CHARLES STEWART, AFTERWARDS 3RD MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY.

sufficient allowance for the extreme difficulty of the Prince's strategical position, for the delicacy of his political situation as the *parvenu* successor to an historic royal house, and for his French susceptibilities. Sir Charles was a trustee of British interests, and he took no chances. He viewed Bernadotte from a strictly British point of view, and he maintained that point of view with uncompromising firmness and candour.

Sir Charles Stewart, fortunately for the success of his mission, was not a civilian. He was a cavalry officer of distinction who, before the age of thirty-five, had reached the rank of major-general. After doing good service on Wellington's staff in the Peninsula he had recently been invalided home, and had been specially selected to represent Great Britain at the Prussian head-quarters, and to maintain a *liaison* between the British Government and the Crown Prince of Sweden, who was well known to be more at home with, and to be more manageable by, soldiers than by professional diplomats.

Sir Charles Stewart's birth, breeding, and environment offered a striking contrast to the origin and career of the Crown Prince. From childhood he had enjoyed an assured position in a settled society, and his rapid rise had followed the regular steps of military promotion. These were very different experiences from those of the Gascon soldier of fortune who, in a disordered community and by a revolutionary ladder, had climbed to the steps of a throne and to the command-in-chief of an international army. It was inevitable that there should be divergences of view and occasional misunderstandings which found expression in dramatic scenes and in animated debates. Sir Charles came to Stralsund from the Prussian head-quarters, where Bernadotte was an

object of jealousy and prejudice. But, as they were both brave soldiers, and, in a genuine sense, thorough gentlemen, the relations of Sir Charles Stewart and Bernadotte were always frank, and, beneath the surface, were never unfriendly.

Sir Charles Stewart, on the evening of his arrival at Stralsund, dined with the Prince, and had a long audience after dinner. His first impressions, which subsequently were modified, were described in a letter written on the following day, 8th July, to his brother, Lord Castlereagh.

"The Prince Royal strikes me as being thoroughly French, *cœur et l'âme*. His engaging manners, his spirited conversation, his facility of expression, and the talents which are perceptible, even on a first interview, made no great impression on me, because I was prepared to meet all this. I rather regarded him as a highly finished actor; and I doubt if he is, in the long run, a character either to admire or confide in. On the contrary, I should even be disposed to watch him narrowly; and the shifts and adroitness he can display, and possesses, would make me, even when sure of him, on the *qui vive*. I may judge him harshly, but I never can look up to him, nor shall I ever think him sterling till I see him spill Swedish in drawing French blood. . . . Certainly throughout the whole of his conversation I remarked a disposition principally to secure Swedish objects . . . and he clothes himself in a pelisse of war, while his undergarments are formed of Swedish objects and peace. England will retain him as long as it is for his advantage to be retained, but there is no natural link between him and his present allies. . . . I should not forget to mention that the news had arrived of the division in the House of Commons on the Swedish treaty. You have fought this admirably; the Prince was in raptures, and you are his greatest favourite."*

* Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, i. 632, 633; Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 76-78.

When Bernadotte returned to Stralsund from Trachenberg Sir Charles Stewart perceived that his interview with the allied Sovereigns had inspired him with fresh confidence and hope. " His Royal Highness," writes Stewart, " produced, as usual, his map, and talked eloquently and scientifically of the great combined operations we should be engaged in." *

Sir Charles gives the following account of his impressions during this period :

" It is impossible to resist the fascination of his eloquent expression or to be indifferent to his insinuating tone and manner. . . . It requires some hardihood to be quite collected, and insensible to beautiful phraseology, so as to discover the drift or solidity of the extraordinary man in whose presence you are at all times admitted and accosted as '*mon ami*.' To do His Royal Highness, however, justice, he was invariably kind and civil, particularly to me ; and when I mentioned the probability of my being at his head-quarters during the forthcoming operations, he assured me I should always be *le bien-venu* ; but, at the same time, told me he never would agree in any convention or treaty, to have British officers, especially general officers, placed near his person, . . . thus evidently showing that he would be extremely jealous of the idea of any counsel or control. All this I took in as respectful a manner as possible."

Sir Charles Stewart had formed a correct judgment in coming quickly to the conclusion that Bernadotte, as a Frenchman by birth, could not suppress a shrinking from the shedding of French blood, and, as Swedish Prince, was more concerned in upholding the interests of Sweden than those of other countries. On the other hand, none of the allied Sovereigns was more determined to bring about the defeat of Napoleon and to liberate his own, and all other European

* Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 88, 143-145 ; Hans Kloeber's *Marschall Bernadotte*, 379.

countries, from his domination ; and none of them had so completely put his destiny to the touch to win or lose everything. Besides, he knew very well that if Napoleon should succeed, he (Bernadotte) would, in the words of a French historian, be treated by the conqueror " as an insolent vassal."* Nobody was more interested in driving Napoleon out of Germany than Bernadotte.

* Capefigue, ix. 505.

CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL MOREAU COMES FROM AMERICA AND PROPHECIES DEFEAT

JULY—AUGUST 1813

A MONTH elapsed between the Conference of Trachenberg and the termination of the Armistice. The Crown Prince occupied the time in making preparations for the coming campaign. He visited Berlin in order to provide for the defence of that city ; and he made an inspection of the foreign troops who were to form part of his army. Sir Charles Stewart, who accompanied him, wrote that the Prince was received throughout his tour more as a conqueror after his victories than as a commander who had yet to be crowned by his exploits. From Berlin he went to Strelitz on the invitation of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Among his fellow guests were the Duke of Cumberland,* third son of George III, and Sir Charles Stewart.

The relations between the Duke and the Crown Prince were cordial. The Crown Prince expressed a wish that the Duke should command the Hanoverian troops. The suggestion was rejected by Sir Charles Stewart, probably on account of the Duke's unpopularity in England. Some difficulties arose as to precedence, of which Sir Charles has left an entertaining record. He writes :

" During the stay of the Prince Royal we had no

* Afterwards King of Hanover.

little difficulty as to the etiquette of this small Court with the two Princes. The Prince Royal, as heir to the throne of Sweden, considered that he should take the *pas*. The Duke of Cumberland most properly and rationally could not brook the idea that one of his blood should give way at his uncle's Court to Bernadotte; much less did he incline to cede the fair Princess who presided there. The old Duke of Mecklenburg, under these circumstances, entreated me to settle upon some plan for them to get from the salon to the dining-room. After some reflection, I proposed that the two ladies of rank present, the Princess of Solms and the Landgravine of Darmstadt, should go out together and that the two Princes should follow hand in hand. This was adopted after considerable difficulty; but the Duke of Cumberland soon assumed his just rights, and took the first place by the Princess, which the Prince Royal not only perceived, but resented, by showing extreme ill-humour during the dinner."

It is plain that in this social skirmish the ex-marshal was obliged to submit to being out-maneuvred by the English Duke.

From Strelitz the Prince returned to Stralsund in order to receive his old comrade and friend, General Moreau, who had come from the United States to help the Coalition against Napoleon. In a former volume the story has been told of General Moreau's trial for high treason, and of his expulsion from France by Bonaparte in 1804.* For nine years Moreau had resided in the United States brooding over the injustice of which he had been the victim, and awaiting his opportunity.

One of the arrangements at Abo between the Czar and the Prince Royal had been the sending of an invitation to Moreau, which reached him in America in March 1813. He made haste to accept it, and

* *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 73.



MARSHAL OUDINOT.



GENERAL MOREAU.

wrote a letter to Bernadotte, which contained the following passage :

" It is not to the Prince Royal of Sweden that I address myself, but it is to my old comrade in arms. It is to my compatriot that I can and ought to open my innermost thoughts. I am ready to invade France at the head of a French army, but I do not conceal from you my repugnance to doing so at the head of foreign troops."

General Moreau left New York on 21st June, and arrived at Gothenburg on 26th July. He was received by a Swedish general, who assured him that his presence was " worth a hundred thousand men "; and he made a rapid journey to Stralsund, where he was welcomed by the Crown Prince early in August with salvoes of artillery and with every mark of honour. Meanwhile the Prince wrote to Lafayette :

" If we three, Moreau, you, and I, should fall from the clouds one of these days, and descend in the middle of the Place Vendôme, we might perhaps run some risk of losing our lives, but who can say that it might not lead to a revolution ? "

Moreau spent three days with the Crown Prince at Stralsund. They had many interesting conversations, some passages from which are worth recording in dialogue form. They bring out very forcibly the perilous position of Bernadotte's army from a strategical point of view. Moreau, who envisaged the situation from a strictly military standpoint, was of opinion that Bernadotte was certain to be defeated.*

" *General Moreau* : Your line of operations is a dangerous one between the Baltic, the Elbe, and Oder, with no base save Stralsund, surrounded by

* Sarrans, i. 321 ; Lafosse, ii. 350.

fortresses occupied by French troops. If you march to Berlin you will advance through a veritable death-trap to a city which is at the enemy's gates."

" *The Crown Prince* : Yes, my position is a bad one, I admit. But I shall be frank with you. Our old friendship is a guarantee that you will not abuse my confidence. My position, although it is a dangerous one which offends your strategic instinct, has certain political and military advantages for Sweden and for me. Politically I exercise authority in North Germany where I am the sole arbiter. The Prussians, the Mecklenburgers, and the Hanseatic towns take their cue from me. I know that I have to provide against the risks which attend all coalitions. If a great reverse should befall the allies you will see a general *sauve qui peut*, a scramble for peace, the betrayal of engagements, the sacrifice of allies. In the Emperor Napoleon we have to deal, as you know, with a man who is even more active in negotiation than in the field. So far as my military position is concerned, I have 18,000 men to hold Marshal Davout and the Danes, plenty of cavalry for flank and vanguard work, and 60,000 men with which to deal with any enemy columns which may debouch from the Elbe fortresses. The Emperor Napoleon will . . . fatigue his army by useless marches. I count on these things more than upon our own movements.

" *General Moreau* : These considerations are beyond me. Your position may have political advantages. But it is another question whether it will pass muster strategically.

" *The Crown Prince* : Quite so, general. As a Swedish Prince I must hold the Stralsund line. Win or lose, it leaves me in touch with Denmark, with Norway, and with my latest ally, England. I am not disposed to end my career in the marshes of Poland, or, like Charles XII, at Bender. I do not disguise from you the simple fact that, if my communications with Sweden are cut, it means the loss of my army and disaster to my country.

" *General Moreau* : I am too ignorant of the

policy of the European cabinets to be able to discuss such a delicate question. I owe you my frank opinion. I think you will be beaten.

" *Crown Prince* : I hope not, and I am resolved never to accept battle on unequal terms.

" *General Moreau* : Will you always be master of the situation? What good is Berlin to you? How are you going to protect a city which stands wide open, and without any fortifications or natural defences?

" *Crown Prince* : Berlin is the heart of the Prussian Monarchy ; whoever possesses it will always have a great moral and material ascendancy. These are things worth possessing. Besides, it is the centre of the resources of North Germany.

" *General Moreau* : But it is close to the enemy's outposts.

" *Crown Prince* : If Napoleon takes Berlin from me he will not obtain it cheaply. Besides, I shall always take care to steal a march on him. He will not catch me, although I may have to fall back on Stralsund, or on Rugen, or even on my fleet."*

General Moreau had a cold reception at the allied Head-quarters. As the allied commanders were unwilling to serve under him, he had to be content with the position of official military adviser to the Emperor Alexander. This arrangement was a futile one. The allied commanders ignored his advice. One instance will suffice. During the operations against Dresden he advised an assault on the city. The Austrian commander-in-chief said that he did not wish to destroy the city. " No wonder," replied Moreau, " that for seventeen years you have always been beaten." There was no genuine regret among the German generals when, within a fortnight after his arrival, he was killed by a cannon-shot which carried off both his legs and pierced his

* Cf. Sarrans, i. 321 ; Lafosse, ii. 350.

horse's body. It was a tragical ending for a French general. The only sincere mourner in the allied camps was his compatriot, Bernadotte, who paid honour to his memory, befriended his widow, and contributed a hundred thousand francs to the dowry of his daughter.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEFENCE OF BERLIN—THE CROWN PRINCE'S VICTORIES AT GROSSBEEREN AND AT DENNE- WITZ

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 1813

THE armistice came to an end upon 10th August, having lasted for nearly nine weeks. We have seen that the allies had turned the truce to good account by concerting a Plan of Campaign under the guidance of the Crown Prince of Sweden. Before the expiration of another nine weeks the hostilities which were now resumed were to result in the complete defeat of Napoleon. In the present chapter, and in the succeeding one, we shall follow the proceedings of the Crown Prince during that eventful period. In doing so, we shall not attempt to treat the military operations of the campaign in detail or to do more than glance at the part which was played in them by the Prince himself.

On the day of the denunciation of the armistice the Prince left Swedish Pomerania in order to take part in the defence of Berlin, which was threatened by a French army of 70,000 men under Marshal Oudinot, Duke of Reggio. Napoleon had planned an artful manœuvre. Marshal Oudinot was to cut the Crown Prince off from Berlin, and Marshal Davout, operating from Hamburg, was to cut off his retreat to the sea and to Sweden.* The Prince,

* *Rose's Napoleon*, ii. 333.

however, was on his guard, and was determined not to be caught in a trap.

On the march to Berlin the Prince had to pass Stettin, the fortified capital of Prussian Pomerania. It was here that an incident occurred which served to bring into strong relief the bizarre position which he occupied in relation to his former countrymen. The Prince and his staff were fired on from the walls, and the French commandant, when asked for an explanation of the shot, replied, "It was a simple police affair. A deserter was signalled, and the guard fired."

On the 12th August Bernadotte, having reached Oranienberg, some twenty miles north of Berlin, issued a proclamation in which he painted a picture of the nations of Europe uniting as one family to escape from the slavery which was involved in the Napoleonic domination and to resist the power which threatened to invade and to subjugate them all. He concluded with an amazing appeal to his army to win repose, independence, and peace by imitating the achievements of the French revolutionary army of 1792. This wild flight of his imagination was an echo of his own experiences as a subaltern in the army of the Revolution. What must the French royalists, who were his comrades in arms in the present campaign, have thought of such an allusion?

It was characteristic of Bernadotte to talk tempestuously and to act judiciously. He now proceeded to select a very favourable position about ten miles south of Berlin near the village of Grossbeeren, and to await Marshal Oudinot's attack. After a few days of skirmishing the French army advanced in three columns, which were led respectively by Marshal Oudinot himself, and by Generals Bertrand and Reynier. Somehow or other the three columns lost touch of each other. Oudinot

afterwards blamed Reynier for advancing too quickly and Bertrand for lagging behind. As a result Reynier found himself unsupported and face to face with the Prussians under Bülow. Bernadotte took advantage of the enemy's blunders. He ordered up his reserve to enfilade Reynier's right flank, and sent up some Swedish artillery to attack him on the left. The French were out-numbered and out-manœuvred, with the result that Bülow carried the village of Grossbeeren and utterly routed the enemy, with a loss of more than 20,000.

The brunt of the fighting had fallen upon the Prussians, and it was to them and to General Bülow that the Crown Prince attributed the result in his bulletin. To the Prince himself was due the credit of having chosen an advantageous position and of having directed the movements which led to victory. Alison says that "he took his measures with great judgment."^a It quickly became known at the Russian Head-quarters, "from a cloud of intercepted letters, that the Prince's victory had produced an astonishing effect upon the enemy's morale."^b Berlin was saved. Napoleon's artful manœuvre had been foiled. Marshal Davout, instead of cutting the Prince's communications with the sea, had to fall back upon Hamburg. Marshal Oudinot, instead of cutting him off from Berlin, had to retreat towards the Elbe.

Napoleon now superseded Marshal Oudinot, and appointed Marshal Ney to command a second thrust upon Berlin. Ney was the "bravest of the brave," and was a magnificent leader of a vanguard or a rear-guard, but as a tactician he was no match for Bernadotte,^c who met him on 6th September at the

^a Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, ii. 50.

^b F. O., 97-343.

^c Rose's *Napoleon*, ii. 250.

village of Dennewitz, near Jüterbok. The battle-field was situated some ten miles from Wittenberg, one of Napoleon's strong fortresses on the Elbe. The movements of Marshal Ney's army were not properly concerted. When he had placed his army in position, he committed an error of judgment which gave the Prussians under Bülow time to maintain their position until, in the words of Sir Charles Stewart, "the Crown Prince, with seventy battalions of Russians and Swedes, ten thousand cavalry and one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, advanced and obtained a complete and signal victory."^a

The Prussians blamed the Crown Prince for not advancing sooner. But he had reason to anticipate a sortie from the fortress of Wittenberg, which would have required all the force at his disposal to cope with. As soon as that danger had been averted he had turned to the assistance of Bülow. Sir Charles Stewart, in his narrative of the campaign, laid great stress upon the necessity for caution on the part of the allies in reference to the fortresses on the Elbe, of which Wittenberg was one. He observed that, with these fortresses at his disposal, Napoleon "could twist and turn himself like a snake."^b Ex-marshal Bernadotte was an expert in Napoleon's "snake-like" movements, and he probably took a prudent precaution in watching Wittenberg so long as there was any danger from that quarter.

At all events, the Prince's intervention, when it came, was decisive. The effect of the battle of Dennewitz was to save Berlin for the second time. No further attempt was made to attack it. Contemporary opinion in England was reflected in

^a Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 129, 130; *Cambridge Modern History*, ix. 529; Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, ii. 62-64.

^b Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 120.



MARSHAL NEY, PRINCE OF THE MOSKOWA.

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Dr. Syntax's *Life of Napoleon*,* where the following doggerel verses are to be found :

" To oppose the Prince Ney was selected,
From whom great triumphs were expected ;
But when at Juterbok met they,
The Crown Prince was a match for Ney."

The Russian General Benningsen wrote, after the battle :

" It is with sincere admiration and pleasure that I have heard, Monseigneur, of the great success of your army. These great and brilliant victories, which have cost the enemy so dearly, justify my expectations to hear of nothing but victory wherever your Royal Highness commands."†

On the evening of the battle Bernadotte heard that Colonel Clouet, Marshal Ney's first aide-de-camp, had been wounded and was a prisoner, and he gave special orders that the colonel should be treated with all the care which his state required, and with the respect that was due to his rank and to the marshal to whose Staff he was attached. In sending a report of Colonel Clouet's condition to his old comrade, Marshal Ney, he took the opportunity of urging the marshal to use his influence for peace.

" Although the interests," he wrote, " which we serve are different, yet I have pleasure in thinking that our sentiments have ever remained the same, and I shall seize with the greatest eagerness every opportunity of assuring you that I remain constant in the friendship which I have always entertained for you. For a long time we have been ravaging the earth, and we have yet done nothing for the cause of humanity. The confidence which you so justly enjoy with the Emperor Napoleon might, it appears to me, be of some weight in determining

* Page 203.

† Benningsen, iii. 296.

His Majesty at length to accept an honourable and general peace, which has been offered to him, but which he has rejected. This glory, Prince, is worthy of a warrior such as you, and the French nation would rank this eminent service amongst the number which we performed twenty years ago, when we fought for its liberty and for its independence under the walls of St. Quentin."^a

The Crown Prince followed up this letter by procuring Colonel Clouet's release and by making him the bearer of similar letters addressed to Marshals Berthier, Murat, Macdonald and Oudinot. Napoleon was furious when they handed him Bernadotte's messages. He regarded advice to make peace coming from such a quarter as an insult. He called Berthier "an old fool," and Murat "a traitor." Murat left him soon afterwards in an angry and resentful mood, and returned to his Kingdom of Naples.

These victories had a marked effect upon Napoleon's German allies, who were beginning to be impatient of his yoke. The Prince proceeded to issue a proclamation inviting the Saxons to join him, which annoyed Napoleon so much that he ordered a man to be shot who was found circulating it. The Saxon generals informed Napoleon that they could not answer for the fidelity of the Saxon troops if they were opposed to the Prince, so great was his prestige among the Saxon soldiers whom he had commanded in 1809 in the campaign of Wagram. Bavaria now acceded to the cause of the allies, and troops came to the Prince's standards from Westphalia, where Jerome Bonaparte had been removed from the throne. The supreme struggle was approaching—Bernadotte had been manœuvring against two of Napoleon's marshals; he was now to manœuvre against Napoleon himself.

^a Meredith, 203.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MISSION OF THE COUNT DE ROCHECHOUART— THE CROWN PRINCE CROSSES THE ELBE AND THE RUBICON

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1813

AFTER the battle of Dennewitz the Crown Prince moved to Zerbst, near the eastern bank of the river Elbe, where he remained for three weeks. He was severely blamed by some of his allies, and especially by the Prussians, for hesitating to cross the Elbe and to press forward. But there were good reasons for his hesitation. The passing of the Elbe meant for him the crossing of a Rubicon. Once across the river he would be face to face with Napoleon, with the Elbe between him and Sweden, and a net-work of fortresses threatening his rear and his flanks. Nobody was more anxious that he should follow the Prussian advice than Napoleon, who remarked that, if the Prince should venture to cross the Elbe, "the war would be soon over." * Sir R. Wilson, who hated Bernadotte, saw where the risk lay. He recognised that Napoleon was trying to draw the Prince on, so as to meet him on the field without removing himself too far from his base of operations. Sir Robert wrote in his diary, "Although I do not like the man, I think the sacrifice of his communications is too much to require of him and may affect his royal interests and security." †

* *Corr. de Napoléon*, 20680.

† *Wilson's Diary*, ii. 124, 125, 160.

The Prince defended himself vigorously from these accusations of inaction. Count Pozzo di Borgo described him as denouncing his critics "with the violence of a muleteer." By the word "muleteer" he alluded to the Spanish and Moorish strains in Bernadotte's blood and temperament. He was particularly "muleteerish" in his comments upon the military views of the Prussian generals, one of whom, von Krusemark, had to plead indisposition in order to escape the torrent of his wrath.

What ultimately put an end to the Prince's hesitation was the frank advice, founded upon political rather than upon military considerations, which he received from a young French officer, the Count de Rochechouart, who came to him on a special mission from the Emperor of Russia. The episode, as told in the young man's memoirs,* is an extremely interesting one, because the Prince revealed his innermost thoughts to the young Frenchman.

The Count de Rochechouart's mission arose in the following way. The allied Sovereigns came to the conclusion that the time had come to signify in a striking manner their appreciation of the Crown Prince's recent victories, and at the same time to stimulate him to renewed exertions. Accordingly, they sent three separate envoys to the Swedish headquarters as the bearers of ribands and of letters of congratulation. The Czar sent the Grand Cordon of the Order of St. George, to obtain which it was necessary to win a decisive battle as general-in-chief. Nobody possessed it at this moment. The last bearer of this decoration had been Field-Marshal Prince Kutusof, who had been in chief command during the pursuit of Napoleon from Moscow in 1812. The Emperor of Austria sent him the riband of the

* Rochechouart, *Souvenirs*, 245-257.

Order of Maria Theresa, a military order given for distinguished conduct in the field. The King of Prussia sent him the Iron Cross, which was then a new order, the institution of which in the previous March was one of the outcomes of the enthusiasm with which Prussia entered upon the War of Liberation.

The Czar chose for this mission a young French aide-de-camp of his, the Count de Rochechouart, a royalist *émigré* belonging to one of the historic families of France, and gave him strict orders to reach the Crown Prince's head-quarters before the Austrian and Prussian envoys. The Count succeeded in winning this diplomatic race by twelve hours. He was received by the Russian commissary, Count Pozzo di Borgo, who congratulated him upon his celerity, and whispered in his ear, "Listen attentively to everything the Prince says, so as to be able to repeat every word to me."

The Count de Rochechouart tells us in his memoirs that Bernadotte received him with the utmost cordiality, expressing his gratitude to the Czar for having chosen one of his own compatriots as his messenger. He was delighted that the young Frenchman had arrived at his head-quarters before the Austrian and the Prussian envoys. "They were beaten in the race as usual," he said. "They did not know how to move quickly. You out-distanced them. That is as it should be. You are a Frenchman. They are Germans."

The young envoy, who tells us that he was much impressed by the Crown Prince's "charm of manner and choice of expression," has recorded in his memoirs the following description of Bernadotte as he found him in October 1813.

"His [Bernadotte's] conversation," he wrote,

"was refined, but was seasoned with a Gascon accent of the most pronounced kind. He was at this date forty-nine years of age. He was tall and striking in appearance. His eagle-like countenance recalled the great Condé. His abundant black hair harmonised with his dark Béarnais complexion. His cavalry uniform was, perhaps, a little too theatrical, but his reputation for *sang-froid* on the field of battle made one forget that slight defect. It would be impossible to meet a man more fascinating in his manners and conversation. He captivated me completely, and if I had been attached to his service I would have been sincerely devoted to him. Some people say that, in order to win people, he employs Gascon promises which he does not always keep. I saw no trace of duplicity or hypocrisy, but rather of a genuinely kind and generous heart."

The young aide-de-camp, who was accustomed to observe the staffwork at the allied head-quarters, was astonished at the ease and speed with which the Crown Prince, without the aid of a map or a note, dictated the orders of the day and the quartering of the various units of his army. Upon one of these occasions, when the chief of his staff had left the room, he turned to de Rochechouart and said, "Do you know that gentleman? That is M. d'Adlercreutz, the dethroner of Kings.* I shall manage him so well that he will give up that occupation."

The young officer felt very much embarrassed when the Prince suddenly revealed his *arrière-pensées* in reference to the succession to Napoleon's throne.

"France," he said, "does not want an Emperor. That is not a French title. France wants a King. But the King must be a soldier. The Bourbons are

* D'Adlercreutz, had taken a leading part in dethroning Gustavus IV.

played out. 'They will never come to the surface again. What man would suit the French people better than myself?'

The young Count replied that he was not there to discuss such a question, and for this prudent answer he was afterwards commended by the Czar.

To de Rochechouart the Prince confided his dislike of Prussia and his poor opinion of the Prussian generals. He spoke slightly of Blücher: "I knocked him into pieces at Lübeck," he said. He also gave free expression to his distrust of Count Pozzo di Borgo, whom he always spoke of as "that cunning Corsican."

When de Rochechouart broached the real subject of his errand by suggesting that Bernadotte should follow up his recent victory by a vigorous advance against the enemy, the Prince gave the following frank description of the peculiar situation in which he was placed:

"Ah! you must understand, my friend, that my present position is so delicate and difficult as to require the utmost prudence on my part. Quite apart from my natural repugnance to the shedding of French blood, I have my reputation to maintain. I have no illusions. My fortunes are staked on a single battle. If I were defeated, I might search Europe in vain to find anyone to lend me six francs."

De Rochechouart saw that, if he was to succeed in his mission, it must be by urging political rather than military reasons. So he set himself to convince Bernadotte that his reputation and his fortunes were in danger of being compromised by over-caution. Having obtained permission to speak his mind frankly, he told the Prince that all the allied diplomats were saying that he was resting too long on his

laurels, and that, if they should succeed in making the Czar believe that he had adopted a policy of calculated inaction, the consequence might be very grave. He went so far as to recall the fact that the young Pretender to the throne of Sweden, the heir of the Vasas, was a nephew of the Emperor of Russia, and to imply that, by holding back, the Prince might be risking the loss of Russia's support of his dynasty.

As a result of these representations, the Prince announced his intention of crossing the Elbe on the following day; but he exacted a promise from de Rochechouart that he would not tell "the cunning Corsican," Count Pozzo di Borgo, the reason of his sudden change of plan.

On the following morning, when de Rochechouart presented himself in order to take his leave, the Prince came forward and presented to him a cross of the Military Order of the Sword, saying, "M. de la Rochechouart, this is what the Crown Prince of Sweden gives you." Then, leading him to the embrasure of a window, he handed him a gold snuff-box bearing his own portrait set in diamonds, and added, "This is what your compatriot Bernadotte begs you to accept." The young envoy tells us in his memoirs that it would be impossible to describe the amiable and graceful manner in which this little scene was enacted.

De Rochechouart, on his return from his mission, interested and amused the Czar by relating his experiences at the Swedish camp and by giving imitations of Bernadotte's Gascon style and accent. It appears that the Prince had betrayed his ignorance of the French "peerage" by addressing the envoy as M. de *la* Rochechouart, instead of de Rochechouart. However, he showed the genuineness of his regard for Bernadotte by refusing to repeat the imitations,

when requested to do so, for the amusement of the Grand Duke Constantine. The Grand Duke was offended by the refusal, and turned his back angrily upon the young aide-de-camp.

Meanwhile, the Crown Prince kept his word. Before de Rochechouart had reached the Russian head-quarters the Prince had crossed the Elbe, and, at the same moment, the Rubicon.

CHAPTER XVII

"THE BATTLE OF THE NATIONS"—THE DEFEAT OF NAPOLEON AT LEIPSIK

OCTOBER 1813

THE crossing of the Elbe by the Crown Prince on 4th October precipitated the climax of the campaign. A fortnight afterwards, on 18th October, Napoleon was defeated on the plains of Leipsic. This fortnight formed a feverish interval. It is not easy to follow or to appreciate the rapid turns and twists of events. Napoleon frequently changed his plans, and the Crown Prince had to meet each change of plan with some corresponding movement. When Napoleon seemed to be turning back towards the Rhine the Prince crossed the river Saale in order to cut off his retreat. When Napoleon seemed to be marching upon Berlin, the Crown Prince recrossed the river and went northwards in order to cover the Prussian capital. Finally, when Napoleon made up his mind to accept battle in the neighbourhood of Leipsic, the Crown Prince, who was at Cothen, about thirty miles from that city, had to make a counter-march towards the appointed battle-field.

A serious difference now arose between the Prince and General Blücher, who was at Halle, half-way between Cothen and Leipsic. Blücher wished the Prince to come up and cover his left wing. The Prince proposed to follow the Prussians and to advance in the second line. He pointed out that



PRINCE BLÜCHER;
After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Blücher was advising the very manœuvre which had proved disastrous at Eylau. The military commissaries of the allies were unanimous in supporting Blücher's advice; and Sir Charles Stewart, who always had the courage of his opinions, urged the Crown Prince to press forward at all hazards :

"I blended," he wrote in his narrative of the campaign, "the respect I had for his military renown with an honest disclosure of my sentiments. I expressed my gratitude for his condescension in listening to me, when he had an undoubted right to consider himself best qualified to judge."

Sir Charles followed up this advice with a letter in which he wrote :

"Allow me to observe that every moment is precious. The English nation has its eyes on you. It is my duty to speak frankly."

On the 15th October a round robin which was signed by all the allied staff officers who were attached to his army, urged him to "take up a position which would enable him to take part in the coming operations and to associate his name for ever with the great result."

The Prince, however, followed his own judgment, with the result that on the following day, 16th October, his army took no part in the bloody and indecisive battle of Wachau, which was preliminary to the battle of Leipsic, and is sometimes referred to as its first day. He occupied the day in bringing up his army as far as Lansberg, about twenty miles from Leipsic, so as to close in upon the French troops and so as to create a situation which would make it utterly impossible for Napoleon to escape defeat.

On the evening of the 16th Sir Charles Stewart wrote another urgent letter from Blücher's headquarters pressing the Prince to make a night march

to Taucha. On this occasion he wrote : " There is not an instant to be lost. . . . I speak as a friend and as a soldier. If you do not commence your march you will always regret it." The Prince did not take this advice. Perhaps he knew that a night march would be unnecessary, as there was a suspension of hostilities on the 17th, which gave both sides time to prepare for the decisive day.

On the morning of the 18th October Sir Charles had an animated interview with the Prince, the conclusion of which was creditable to both of them.*

" Do you forget," said Bernadotte, " that I am Prince of Sweden and one of the first generals of the age ? . . . If you were in my place what would you think if anyone were to write to you as you have written to me ? Do you wish us to remain friends ? You know the friendship I feel for you. Why not discuss military matters together ? Tell me your thoughts. But do not write to me any more, I beg of you."

Sir Charles Stewart, who showed admirable firmness and tenacity in pressing home his honest views and convictions, refused to adopt a self-denying ordinance which would have prevented him from putting his thoughts to paper. Answering in a most respectful tone, he said that, if the Prince was displeased with his correspondence, he would write in future to the chief of his staff. He added that his anxious desire was to assist the Swedish nation ; but that he could never see their chief departing from what he knew were the true interests of his situation, without remonstrating boldly. Bernadotte was disarmed by these frank words. The interview ended in cordial handshakes and in a reconciliation.

It was immediately after this interview that the

* Lord Londonderry, *Narrative*, 177 ; Stedingk, *lii.* 227, 229.

Prince advanced. His army was fresh and eager for the encounter. Having crossed the river Partha, which divided him from the enemy's right wing, he attacked the French lines. He first drove them out of the villages which formed the outskirts of the city, and then carried the suburbs, after desperate fighting which ended only with nightfall. One of the turning-points in the battle was the desertion of twenty-two Saxon batteries to the side of the allies. This was mainly due to the prestige which the Prince of Sweden enjoyed with the Saxon army, which he had commanded at the battle of Wagram in 1809. Another incident of the day was the valuable service of the English artillery. They made effective use of the Congreve rocket, then a new invention, which, by its noise and glare, even more than by the damage which it inflicted, caused confusion in the enemy's ranks. The victory was complete when "the sun went down in thick wreaths of smoke amid the thunder of 1,500 guns."^a

The Prince exposed himself with his usual *sang-froid*. An aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia, who was sent to the Swedish head-quarters with a confidential message, gave the following description of what he saw :

"The Prince of Sweden received us, mounted on a big white horse. He wore a pelisse of violet velvet braided with gold, with white plumes and a *panache* of Swedish colours. He held in his hand a baton draped in violet velvet ornamented with gold. He looked superb, with shot and shell falling round him [*au milieu de la mitraille*], encircled by dead and wounded, encouraging by his presence a brigade of English artillery."^b

^a *Cambridge Modern History*, ix. 539.

^b De Rochechouart, 261.

It was said that the Prince revenged himself upon Count Pozzo di Borgo and upon the other allied commissaries, who had so severely criticised his cautious tactics, by taking them with him everywhere during the day, which meant that they were nearly always under fire. If he did so, it made no difference to the English commissaries. The English generals who took part in this campaign, such as Sir Charles Stewart and Sir Robert Wilson, were always in the thick of the fray, and frequently rendered important services at critical moments.

On the morning of the 19th the Crown Prince took a foremost part in taking possession of the city, which was defended by Marshals Ney, Macdonald, Marmont, and Poniatowski. When the allied sovereigns met him in the square of Leipsic, they overwhelmed him with congratulations. The Czar embraced him, exclaiming, "You see we have kept the rendezvous which you named at Trachenberg." He was even more gratified when he learnt that Lord Castlereagh, in the House of Commons, declared that "the Prince of Sweden had scrupulously observed his engagements."

It is difficult to steer a steady course between the extravagant praise and the equally extravagant depreciation of which the Prince of Sweden now became the object. In the *Leipsic Gazette*, Professor von Schlegel described him as a "chivalrous hero" and as "a cavalier *sans peur et sans reproche*," who had "thrown down his gauntlet before the despot with a brow so serene and an air so noble as to recall the figures of Bayard and Duguesclin." On the other hand, as a set-off against such panegyrics, we find Sir Robert Wilson, who witnessed the entry of the allied sovereigns into Leipsic after the battle, describing the Prince Royal as "dressed like

an opera-master," and referring to him in several passages of his diary as a "fanfaron" and a "charlatan," who was suspected of leanings towards his old compatriots.* These suspicions, which reflected the current opinions of the Prussian and Austrian Staffs, were strengthened by his attentions to the French prisoners. He placed his purse at their disposal, and released 1,500 of them on parole.

Some of the French prisoners responded cordially to his advances; others bitterly resented them. General Delmas, who was mortally wounded, was visited by the Prince and by General Langeron, who was a French Royalist in the service of Russia. To their words of sympathy Delmas is said to have replied, "You, Langeron, were an *émigré*, and owed little to France and nothing to Napoleon. Serve your master, and be happy if you can. But as for you, Bernadotte, you were a child of the Revolution, and were loaded with favours by the Emperor. Do not make me your accomplice. Do not insult my agony, traitor; but let me die an honest man."

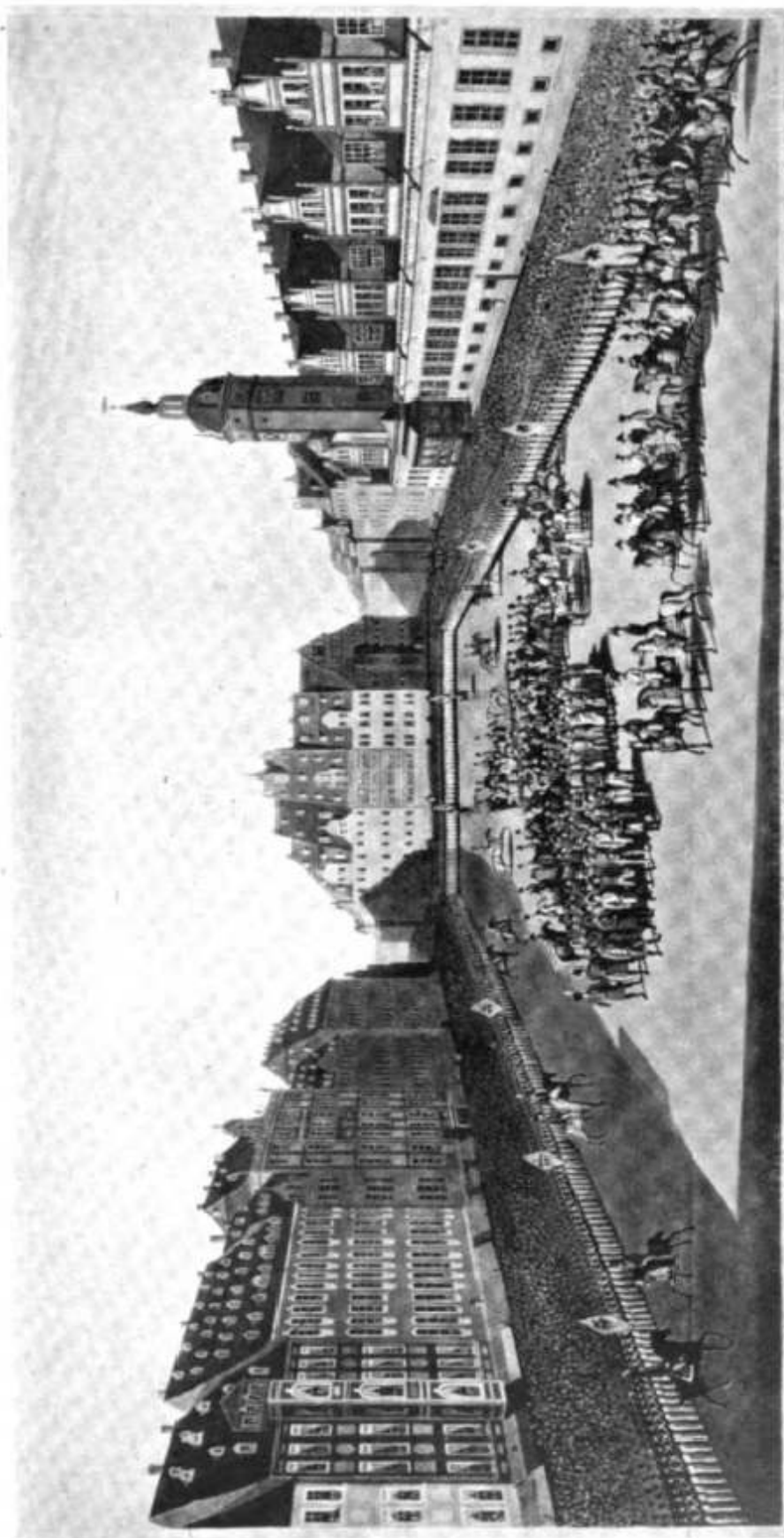
Whether this dramatic talk has been correctly recorded may be doubtful, but the words which were attributed to General Delmas undoubtedly represented the prevalent sentiments of the French generals towards the ex-marshal. They recognised that the dominating causes of their defeat had been his preparation and execution of the allied plan of campaign, and his well-timed appearance with a fresh army on the plains of Leipsic on the morning of the 18th October.

Napoleon himself, at St. Helena, bitterly reproached his ex-marshal for having "given to the

* At St. Helena Napoleon said to Dr. O'Meara, "Probably they called him [Bernadotte] 'charlatan' because he was inclined to boasting."

allies the key of his policy and of his military tactics and for having opened the way to France."

It was Bernadotte's intimate knowledge of Napoleonic strategy and tactics that explains the differences of opinion which caused so much friction between the Crown Prince and the other allied commanders. They seemed to him to be adhering to the same methods of warfare which had enabled Napoleon and his marshals to defeat them one by one at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Friedland. He had studied from behind the scenes, the arts by which Napoleon had won so many victories. Being pitted against the most famous and the most skilful captain of the age, and being familiar with every turn of that brilliant and subtle mind, he was convinced that without extreme caution and circumspection a complete victory could not be achieved. Before the campaign had opened he had said to General Moreau that he was "resolved never to accept battle on unequal terms." This resolution remained unshaken to the end, in spite of the efforts of Napoleon to draw him on, and of the Prussian generals to egg him on.



ENTRY OF THE ALLIED SOVEREIGNS INTO LEIPZIG, 19TH OCTOBER, 1813.

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PART III

THE FALL OF NAPOLEON—THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS—THE UNION OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE INVASION OF DENMARK, AND THE CESSION OF NORWAY TO SWEDEN

OCTOBER 1813—JANUARY 1814

THE victory of Leipsic let loose the particular aims which the several allied nations had kept in check or in the background so long as the general issue of the campaign remained in doubt.

"Each of the allies," wrote a Quarterly Reviewer, "coveted a particular part of the spoil, and were willing to risk the fortunes of the whole alliance to secure it. Bernadotte wanted, in the first instance, Norway for his adopted country, and, in the second, Napoleon's crown for himself. Alexander was resolved on seizing the whole of Poland . . . and [wished] at the same time to secure for himself lasting influence at the Tuileries by selecting Bernadotte, instead of Louis XVIII, to replace Napoleon."*

Prussia looked for a slice of Saxony and for the recovery and enlargement of her lost provinces on the Rhine. Austria was concerned about the Tyrol and dreamed of aggrandisement in Italy. England was comparatively free from self-seeking; but her interests in Hanover, and in the neutralisation of the coast-line of the Netherlands, were matters which necessarily affected her point of view.

These cleavages in the general purpose of the alliance had the effect of splitting the direction of

* *Quarterly Review*, January 1862, p. 208.

the allied armies. Bernadotte claimed the right to wheel northwards for the purpose of compelling Denmark to relinquish Norway. He insisted that the discharge of the allies' debt to Sweden should no longer be postponed, and urged that, quite apart from his own interest in acquiring Norway, a prudent strategy required his presence in North Germany, where more than fifty thousand French and Danish troops under the redoubtable Marshal Davout were garrisoning or covering all the strong places. When the Prussians and Austrians objected to any weakening of the main army, he threatened to retire with his army to Swedish Pomerania and to await the orders of his King.

The Czar took Bernadotte's side, pointing out that it was necessary to keep Marshal Davout at bay and at the same time to prevent him from joining and reinforcing Napoleon. The Prussians and the Austrians gave way with a bad grace. The Prince was not, as yet, given a free hand to proceed to extremities against Denmark; but he was detached towards the Danish frontier, with the ostensible object of observing and checkmating the enemy's garrisons and scattered detachments in Northern Germany.

Bernadotte's pertinacity in insisting upon the terms of his bargain about Norway was not uncalled for. Among the allies there were powerful influences at work to cheat him of the reward which he had earned. For example, we find Sir Robert Wilson, the British military attaché at the allied headquarters, expressing a hope, in his diary, that Bernadotte would not be allowed to acquire Norway, while admitting that its acquisition was the express condition upon the faith of which he had joined the alliance. On 5th November 1813 Wilson wrote

In his diary: "Metternich gave us a dinner . . . he said he would extricate us from that most injudicious and impolitic engagement, and from the pressing embarrassment, of 'the Norway cession'." ^a Here was Metternich, the Austrian Foreign Minister, proclaiming, with the concurrence of the British military attaché, the intention of breaking faith with Bernadotte and of depriving him, by some device or other, of the price of his co-operation. It is no wonder that the Prince, who was the object of this treacherous design, recognised the necessity of vigilance in demanding the enforcement of his compact.

Bernadotte, before his departure from Leipsic, had a falling out with the Prussians, who were in a hurry to dethrone the King of Saxony and to incorporate his kingdom in Prussia. The Prince had commanded the Saxons in the campaign of Wagram, and had, on their account, involved himself in a notorious quarrel with Napoleon.^b He now boldly took up the cudgels for his former comrades-in-arms, and in doing so delivered a home-thrust at his allies,

"It is true," he said, "that the King of Saxony's fidelity to the Emperor Napoleon has been injurious to the interests of Germany. But the blame is not so much to be attributed to the King, as to the circumstances in which he was placed. He is not the only sovereign who has been the ally of Napoleon. Russia in 1809, Austria and Prussia in 1812, fought on Napoleon's side. Yet neither of these powers approved of his devastating aims, or wished to consolidate his powers or to rivet chains on Europe. They obeyed a temporary necessity which was stronger than their wills or their sentiments."^c

^a Sir Robert Wilson's *Diary*, ii. 216, and see Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, ii. 180.

^b *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 226-331.

^c *Sarrans*, ii. 98, 99.

This dispute might have developed into a quarrel if the Czar had not thrown oil on the troubled waters by obtaining the postponement until the conclusion of the war of all questions affecting the status of the Saxons.

While the main army headed for the Rhine by way of Frankfort, where they waited and debated for six weeks over their next step, the Crown Prince marched towards the Danish frontier by way of Hanover, where the inhabitants, by their cordial welcome, evinced their grateful recollection of his former administration of their country in 1804 and 1805.^a The Hanoverian Government issued a proclamation praising his love of justice and his heroism, and welcoming him as the Deliverer of Germany. Sir Charles Stewart reported to the British Government that his enthusiastic reception in Hanover must have been very gratifying to the Prince.

During this lull in the military operations Bernadotte sent courier after courier to Frankfort urging the allies to suspend hostilities, to leave France to what he described as her "natural boundary" of the Rhine, and to isolate Napoleon from his subjects by convincing them that the Napoleonic policy of European enslavement was the sole obstacle to peace, and the sole motive of what was in truth a "War of Liberation." Not satisfied with advocating these ideas in confidential despatches, he embodied them in public proclamations.^b

The idea of allowing France to keep her conquered territory on the west of the Rhine accorded with Bernadotte's French sympathies and aims; but there was no chance of its being adopted by his allies. The Prussians were resolved not only to re-

^a *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 92-99.

^b *Sarrans*, ii. 109-111.

cover their lost provinces on the west side of the Rhine, but also to annex some of France's ancient territory. Russia was disposed to support Prussia in the expectation that Prussia would acquiesce in a Russian annexation of part of Poland. England had very little interest in the Rhine ; but she had no intention of allowing the Belgian or Dutch coasts to remain in the hands of France or of any other great European Power. None of the allies were disposed to listen to Bernadotte's suggestion that there should be a suspension of hostilities. They were all agreed that there was no hope of a durable peace unless it was imposed at Paris upon a conquered nation.

While Bernadotte had to content himself with vain protests against the general plan of campaign, he was determined to carry out his own policy of gaining Norway for Sweden. In letter after letter addressed to the Czar he pressed for leave to proceed to extremes against Denmark. Not until it became clear that he would retire to Sweden if he did not gain his own way, was consent reluctantly forthcoming.* But the precaution was taken, before hostilities were commenced, of sending an Austrian plenipotentiary on behalf of the allies to Copenhagen offering to rest satisfied, for the time being, with the cession to Sweden of the Norwegian province of Trondhjem. When this offer was rejected the Crown Prince crossed the Danish frontier, overcame a gallant resistance, and succeeded in establishing his head-quarters at Kiel on 13th December. After a three weeks' armistice he invaded Schleswig, reduced its fortresses, and occupied that province. The Danish Government now capitulated, and on 4th January 1814 the Treaty of Kiel was concluded, by which

* Sarrans, ii. 114.

the King of Denmark ceded " the kingdom of Norway with all its inhabitants, towns, villages, fortresses, and islands," to the King of Sweden, and the King of Sweden ceded Swedish Pomerania and the island of Rugen to the King of Denmark.

The Crown Prince, after the signature of the Treaty of Kiel, wrote a grateful letter to the Czar, sending him the Swedish Order of the Sword.* He described the Czar as " the Agamemnon " of the recent campaign, and added that Sweden had nothing which she could offer him except " a sword and her gratitude." The Czar, in his reply, took the opportunity of spurring on the ex-marshal of France to the invasion of his native country by again dangling before his eyes the glittering prospect of the French throne. " The decisive blows," wrote the Czar, " have been struck. *France will soon have to fix her destinies.* You will be the mediator between her and Europe : *and who knows where a happy star may lead you ?* "

It is difficult to blame this soldier of fortune if he indulged in limitless dreams. The Emperor of Russia was not the only person who encouraged him to cherish them. General Dumouriez wrote to him from England that he was " the last hope for the freedom and welfare of France " ; and he was referred to in the contemporary press as a man " whose talents and reputation dated from a period anterior to Napoleon's," and as " the hope of all true patriots." The Crown of France was his will o' the wisp. In his pursuit of it he failed to perceive how impossible it was that so enchanting a dream could ever be realised. He did not foresee that the allies would certainly reduce France to her ancient size and limits. His fervid imagination pictured the larger France of the

* Sarrans, ii. 119.

Revolution, bounded only by rivers, mountains, and seas. To become King of a little France would have been irreconcilable with his past career, and did not seriously enter into his contemplation. Although he allowed himself to be attracted by this "will o' the wisp," he never allowed it to draw him away from the direct path of his primary duties. Never for an instant did he lose sight of his paramount obligations as the elected Crown Prince of Sweden. The idea of being offered the Crown of France always remained a secondary object, distant and detached.

CHAPTER XIX

THE INVASION OF FRANCE—THE CROWN PRINCE'S DILEMMA

JANUARY-APRIL 1814

THE Crown Prince, having obtained the cession of Norway, left Kiel on 20th January. Instead, however, of proceeding to join his allies in their advance upon Paris, he loitered in Germany for three weeks. His arch-critic, Sir Robert Wilson, described him as "snailing to the Rhine." This delay was due partly to the necessity of securing his communications with Sweden and partly to his disinclination to take any part in the invasion of France.

He argued that, as Germany had been set free from the Napoleonic yoke, the object of the War of Liberation had been accomplished; and he bombarded the allied Sovereigns with despatches in which he implored them to be satisfied with the results of the victory of Leipsic, to refrain from invading France, and to conclude a magnanimous peace.*

To Sir Charles Stewart, who was with him during this troublesome period, the Prince freely unburdened himself, claiming that the success of the campaign had been due to the plan of operations which he had dictated at Trachenberg, complaining of want of consideration from his allies, confessing his "great horror of the idea of the Cossacks desolating France," and his desire for "peace with the French

* F.O., 64-91; Sarrans, II. 131.

nation, which he loved." Sir Charles advised the British Government that the Crown Prince should be humoured, adding that he "has some great qualities, more especially perhaps in the grand projects of war, and he has hitherto, by one means or another, played a distinguished card in public opinion, and his name has a certain magic which one must see the effects of to properly appreciate."* At the same time we find the English general complaining of the Prince's action in releasing 150 French officers and sending them back to France on parole. And, though he never doubted the Prince's fidelity to the allied cause, he complained that Bernadotte was thinking too much of his particular sympathies and interests as well as of his reputation in France.

When, after three weeks' hesitation, he had occupied Cologne and had crossed the Rhine, the Prince, on 12th February, issued the following proclamation to the French people, which created a tremendous sensation. Its tone and spirit were in themselves noble and elevated, but they were entirely out of tune with the Prussian and Austrian animosities towards France which had given to the Alliance the sobriquet of "*la coalition des haines.*"

"Frenchmen, I took up arms by the order of my King to defend the rights of the Swedish people. Having avenged the affronts which they received, and having joined in the deliverance of Germany, I have crossed the Rhine. The vision of that river, on the banks of which I have so often fought victoriously on your behalf, impels me to express to you my innermost thoughts. All enlightened men cherish the wish to see France preserved. Their only object is to prevent her from continuing to be the scourge of

* Bernadotte respected Sir Charles Stewart, and, when his death occurred, spoke of him with feeling and with appreciation (F.O., 73-118).

the world. The Sovereigns have not joined in a coalition in order to make war upon any nation, but in order to force your Government to recognise the independence of other States. These are their sentiments, for the sincerity of which I am to you their surety. Adopted son of Charles XIII., placed by the choice of a free people on the steps of the throne of the Great Gustavus, I can have in the future no ambition except to work for the prosperity of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Would that I might succeed, while discharging that sacred debt to my new country, in contributing at the same time to the happiness of my former compatriots."

This proclamation failed to extricate the Crown Prince from his difficulties. On the contrary it aggravated them. The Prussians and Austrians were exasperated at being told by an ally that "all enlightened men cherish the wish to see France preserved." Napoleon saw in this manifesto a dangerous piece of propaganda because it represented him to his subjects as "the scourge of the world." Already he had been so disquieted by Bernadotte's propaganda that he had instructed his Minister of Police that "the papers should say as little as possible about the Crown Prince of Sweden."^a Bernadotte's conciliatory language did not prevent the mass of the French people from regarding his crossing of the Rhine as a co-operation in the invasion of France. In a contemporary letter an eminent French statesman and scientist is found writing, 'We are informed here that Bernadotte has passed the Rhine. I never could have persuaded myself that this general could make war on French territory. We are living in extraordinary times.'^b

It was becoming evident that between his French sympathies, which hindered him from boldly invading

^a *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*, ii. 305.

^b Chaptal's *Souvenirs sur Napoléon*, 141.

France at the head of his army, and his obligations to his allies, which made it impossible for him to dissociate himself from the invasion, Bernadotte was doomed to fall between two stools.

From the Rhine the Crown Prince moved to Liége, where he remained inactive for a month while the allied armies were closing on Paris. The Czar and Lord Castlereagh agreed that it was useless as well as unreasonable to expect the Prince to take an active part in attacking the territory of France and in besieging its capital. At the same time Lord Castlereagh rightly insisted that the Prince's Russian and Prussian troops should be sent to reinforce the fighting line, with the result that they played a determining part in the final stages of the campaign.*

Now that the Prince was within a day's journey of France, he became the object of a variety of intrigues emanating from Napoleon, from the Bourbons, and from his own family and friends. Early in March an emissary arrived at his head-quarters with a letter from his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte. This was a Doctor Franzenberg, who formerly had been attached to Marshal Bernadotte's household as physician and secretary. He was passed through the French ranks by General Maison, who had been one of Bernadotte's aides-de-camp.

When Franzenberg informed the Prince that the Emperor Napoleon wished to know what course he proposed to take under the existing circumstances, Bernadotte replied :

" You can tell my brother-in-law that I know Napoleon too well not to see a trap in whatever comes from that quarter. I am sure that he either wishes to deceive me or that he deceives himself.

* F.O., 64-91.

My answer to his question as to what course I shall take is to advise him as to the part which he should take—namely, to make peace as soon as possible. He can assure the Emperor that it is not to serve my personal interests that I give him this advice. It is on his account more than on mine that I advise him to make peace, although I know very well that I have always been the object of his secret hate, because he had always misjudged me.”*

Franzenberg proceeded to advise the Prince, on behalf of an influential group of senators and public men, that he should be the first of the allies to present himself in Paris, because, if the choice lay between Napoleon, a Bourbon, or a French general at the head of an army, he believed the latter would be the choice of the nation. Bernadotte's reply was to the effect that he was not prepared to take any initiative, or to run as a candidate against any other competitor, but that he would be ready to take the throne of France if the nation united in offering it to him. It was in the same sense that he wrote to Madame Moreau, in this same month of March, that he had resolved to “abandon himself to events,” and he added that “if fate should enable me to seize an opportunity of usefully serving Europe and the unhappy country of my birth, be assured, Madam, I shall make every sacrifice.”†

Napoleon, when he received General Maison's report of the result of the Franzenberg mission, revenged himself on Bernadotte by sending a copy of the report by the hands of a despatch-rider, who was purposely sent by a route which led him into the enemy's camp.* In this way Napoleon hoped to

* Sarrans, ii. 362; Lafosse, iii. 57.

† Sarrans, ii. 137-138.

* This incident serves to remind us that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, *Brigadier Gerard*, was not a mere flight of imagination.

create distrust and disunion among the allied Sovereigns. This would have been the result if the report had fallen into the hands of Prussian or Austrian staff officers, among whom the rumour of a correspondence between Bernadotte and Maison had already given rise to suspicions which were quite unfounded.* It was fortunate for Bernadotte that the despatch fell into the hands of the Czar, who fully appreciated the extraordinary situation in which the Crown Prince found himself, and did not attach any gravity to the incident. When it was mentioned in his presence, he observed that he had more to complain of from some of his other allies.

A few days after the conclusion of the Franzenberg mission, the Prince had occasion to send the Swedish general Skjöldebrand with despatches to the Czar. The general fell into the enemies' hands and was conducted to Napoleon at St. Dizier, who said to him, "Why has your Crown Prince done me so much harm? But for him I would now be in North Germany." Before Skjöldebrand could make a reply, the Emperor abruptly changed the conversation, and asked whether the Prince was popular in Sweden. "Sire," said Skjöldebrand, "he is adored by the nation and by the army." "I have heard a different story," said the Emperor. "Then you have been deceived, sire." In dismissing Skjöldebrand Napoleon three times repeated, "Tell the Prince Royal to remember that he was born a Frenchman." Skjöldebrand, when making his report of this incident, declared that Napoleon seemed to him far grander on this occasion, in a shabby old chasseur's uniform, alone and in adversity, than when he had been presented to him as Emperor in 1810 in the midst of all the pomp and panoply of his imperial court.^b

* Marmont, vii. 127-128.

^b Lafosse, iii. 68.

Meanwhile the Prince, becoming impatient, had started for Chatillon in order to have a personal interview with the Czar. His route was intercepted by the enemy's flying columns, and he was stopped at Nancy. Here he found himself the object of the attentions of the emissaries of the Bourbon Princes. This incident was the culmination of a series of communications which had passed between Bernadotte and the Bourbons since 1812. These communications were so peculiar, and so interesting, that we propose to devote the next chapter to describing them and to bringing them up to date.

CHAPTER XX

THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE BOURBONS

DECEMBER 1812—MARCH 1814

WE have now reached a point when the relations between the Prince of Sweden and the Bourbon Princes came to a head. When the Comte de Provence,* the exiled heir of the French throne, was informed that Bernadotte had become the ally of the Czar and had declared against Bonaparte, he began to cherish a hope that the ex-marshal of France might play towards himself the part which General Monk had played towards Charles II.

In the winter of 1812 three royalist emissaries had sounded Bernadotte. These were the Duc de Piennes, a French *émigré* residing in Sweden, the Count Alexis de Noailles, who was sure of a welcome from the Crown Prince because he was the nephew of Lafayette, and the Comte de la Ferronnays, a bosom friend of the Duc de Berry. These messengers from the Comte de Provence took up the line that they would be confident of success "if their cause should be adopted and directed by a Prince who was famous for his victories, his magnanimity, his great talents, and his title to the confidence of all the European Sovereigns." The wary Gascon was not to be captured by insincere flattery of this kind. He responded in the same strain, but he committed himself no

* Afterwards Louis XVIII.

further than to hint, through his secretary, at the offer of a commission in the Swedish army for the Duc de Berry.*

So long as the issue of the campaign of 1813 was in doubt the Bourbon Princes left Bernadotte alone. But when Napoleon had been defeated at Leipsic and the main credit of the victory had been awarded by public opinion to the Prince of Sweden, they renewed their activities. Accordingly they despatched another emissary, the young Comte de Bouillé, to the Prince, who was engaged at the moment in the short campaign against Denmark. On this occasion the messenger was the bearer of a letter from the Prince de Condé, who was selected as the signatory of the letter, because it was well known that Bernadotte was an enthusiastic admirer of the house of Condé.

It was with extreme difficulty that Condé was induced to address the ex-sergeant as "Cousin"; but he yielded to the argument that "two great captains need never be shamed of grasping each other by the hand." The choice of Condé for this purpose was justified by the event. The Count de Bouillé was received by Bernadotte with a reserve which was thrown aside, when the young emissary announced that he was the bearer of a letter from the Prince de Condé. "A letter from the Prince de Condé!" exclaimed Bernadotte. "Give it me at once. You could not present yourself to me under better auspices. That race of heroes has always been for me the object of a religious devotion." After reading the letter several times, he took up ground that was common to himself and to his visitor by launching into a tirade against Napoleon's universal tyranny, and into an eloquent eulogy of Henry IV., "who received his baptism at the same font as I,

* Sarrans, ii. 352; Pingaud, 184.

Bernadotte ! " He then got rid of the young Count politely by telling him that he had better plead his cause with the allied Sovereigns at Frankfurt.

De Bouillé acted on this advice, but received no encouragement from the allied Sovereigns. He returned to the head-quarters of the Crown Prince, who was then at Kiel, immersed in the business of the Norwegian settlement. In a conversation with de Bouillé, Bernadotte responded to the Prince de Condé's polite advances with such a shower of flowery compliments that the young Count reported to the exiled Princes that, in his opinion, if the Crown Prince of Sweden were invested with some such title as Constable of France, he might be induced to play a part in restoring the Bourbons.

The Comte de Provence, encouraged by this report, sent back de Bouillé to Bernadotte, who was then in Belgium, offering him the high-sounding title of Generalissimo of the Armies of France, if he would re-establish the Bourbon dynasty. It was explained to him that the ancient dignity of Constable of France was incompatible with the Prince's position as the adopted heir to a foreign throne, that the powers of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom had already been given to the Pretender's brother, Monsieur,* and that the title of Generalissimo of the Armies of France would appear to assure to the Crown Prince all that was necessary in the way of authority and of pre-eminence.

The Comte de Bouillé, finding, on his arrival at Liège, that the Prince had started for Chatillon, followed him to Nancy, where he was received in a manner at once cold and embarrassed, and had to be satisfied with vague assurances of sympathy and with a discouraging reference to the difficulties and

* Afterwards Charles X.

uncertainties of the situation. At that very moment the *dénouement* of the drama was in process of development. Bernadotte could hardly be expected to accept the minor rôle of "General Monk" while he believed it possible that he might himself be offered the principal part of "King Charles the Second."

On his return to Liège, a few days afterwards, he was met by the news of the entry of the allies into Paris and of the turn of the tide in favour of the Bourbons. His golden dream was shattered. The vision of himself as King of France and of his son as King of Sweden melted into thin air.

The sportsmanlike course for the loser of a great prize is to turn round promptly and congratulate the winner. This course Bernadotte pursued in a thoroughly Gascon spirit. He immediately took up his pen and on 4th April wrote the following reply to the letter which he had received in January from the Prince de Condé :

" My Cousin,—The Comte de Bouillé has handed me the letter which you have done me the honour of writing to me. I am infinitely sensible of all the agreeable things which it contains, and I beg your Highness to accept my sincere thanks. Yes! it is glorious to contemplate the possibility of uniting in the cause of the happiness of the land of our birth, and I abandon myself to the hope of seeing the successor of Henri iv. re-established on the throne of France. There is also consolation in the prospect of seeing the end of the numberless calamities which, for so many years, have afflicted our ancient and unhappy country. I am not blind to the fact that, although the allies are already masters of the capital, there are still great difficulties to overcome before the goal is reached, because the despair to which Bonaparte is reduced will cause serious evils so long as he remains in command of an army. Let us hope that this very army of his, listening to the voice of

reason and to the call of their disturbed country, will cast aside their eagles in order to rally under the banner and shadow of the white plume, the memory of which is so dear to Frenchmen. Your Serene Highness's devoted cousin, Charles John."*

There can never be a real co-operation between competitors so long as they remain in competition, and there was not, on either side, any genuineness of feeling or of intention behind the communications which passed between Bernadotte and the chief of the Bourbons between December 1812 and March 1814. Each of them would have preferred to see the throne of France occupied by the other than by Napoleon. Nevertheless, for each of them, the prospect of seeing the other on the throne was an unwelcome *pis aller*. In the princely art of exchanging insincere compliments it would be difficult to say which of them deserved to carry off the prize.

* Sarrans, ii. 16-22.

CHAPTER XXI

BERNADOTTE BIDS FAREWELL TO FRANCE

APRIL 1814

BERNADOTTE'S presence was urgently needed in Sweden. Serious trouble was brewing in Norway, with which he alone could cope. But before returning to his adopted country he was compelled to proceed to Paris. The object of his visit to the French capital was not to push his candidature for the throne of France. That enchanting illusion had been dispelled. Before leaving Belgium he knew that the Bourbons had been recalled and that his chances were at an end. His object was to insist upon the enforcement of the treaty of Kiel, and upon the complete transference of Norway from Denmark to Sweden. On 10th April he moved to Brussels, and reached Paris about the middle of that month.

While he was at Brussels an incident occurred which showed that, now that the Bourbons had replaced Napoleon, he did not approve of "hitting the man who was down." Some French officers had been brought as prisoners to Brussels. The Prince, according to his habit, visited them and treated them cordially. Some of them sought to curry favour with him, and perhaps to obtain their freedom, by exulting over the approaching fall of Napoleon. Bernadotte gave them no encouragement, and observed coldly that their wants would be attended to pending exchange. Then, turning to General Dulore,

who had abstained from joining in the attack on the Emperor, he said, "As for you, General, I give you your liberty. Here is my purse. Return home to France. You can repay me at your leisure. Good-bye, General."*

He spent a fortnight in Paris before bidding it farewell. It was a last farewell. The ex-marshal was destined never to see France again. He found himself in a very different position towards his allies and towards Europe from that which he had occupied after the battle of Leipsic in the previous October. At that time he had been of all the allied chiefs the first in prestige and achievement, and had been widely acclaimed as, *par excellence*, the Liberator of Europe. Having, in the interval, kept aloof from the military operations, he had dropped into a secondary place. The Prussians and the Austrians had always disliked and distrusted him, and they were now quite ready to ignore him and to throw him aside.

Fortunately for the Crown Prince, the Czar and Lord Castlereagh were not forgetful of his services, and were determined to remain true to their engagements. They recognised that it was his appearance with a Swedish army in North Germany that had decided Austria to throw in its lot with the allies; that it was he who had dictated the plan of the victorious campaign; that his signal victories at Grossbeeren and at Dennewitz had saved Berlin; that his was the decisive blow at Leipsic which had ensured the liberation of Germany and had detached the Saxons from Napoleon. They made allowance for his delays and hesitations, knowing that he had reason for caution in manœuvring against Napoleon, and that he stood in a delicate position between

* Sarrans, ii. 138-139.

Sweden and France. Mindful of these things, Russia and England undertook to support the execution of the treaty of Kiel ; and the Czar, with that object in view, sent a Russian force to threaten Denmark from Holstein.

Bernadotte learned in Paris that the Czar had kept faith with him over his candidature for the throne of France, and had put forward his name whenever an opportunity offered itself. The only other Frenchman whose name was seriously entertained was Eugène de Beauharnais. Murat and the Duc d'Orléans had been mentioned only to be rejected. It is impossible to say what might have happened if Bernadotte had taken a vigorous part in the invasion of France and had entered Paris with the prestige of a victorious commander-in-chief.

It was Talleyrand who had managed to glide into the position of arbiter, or at least of the principal adviser of the allies, in reference to the succession to the French throne. Talleyrand had dismissed the ex-marshal's candidature with a series of epigrams. "Why choose a soldier," he said, "when you have just discarded the greatest of them all?" "Bernadotte," he observed, "would only be another phase of the Revolution." "The only possible candidates are Napoleon and Louis xviii. They represent principles. Any other solution would be a mere intrigue." There were movements in Bernadotte's favour among a select group of constitutional liberals, and among some enthusiasts in his native town and province. But he had not the united support of any party in France ; and the Czar was the only one of the allied Sovereigns who took any interest in his destiny.

During his stay in Paris Bernadotte occupied the

town house of his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte. He kept in the background, refusing ceremonial invitations, and taking care not to share in the acclamations with which the royalists received the allied Sovereigns. His only public appearance was at the entry of the Emperor of Austria, from which he could not absent himself. When the allied Sovereigns went to the opera he did not join them, but sat aloof in a private box. What a contrast to the distribution of the Eagles in 1804!

During his stay in the French capital Bernadotte was observed to be ill at ease. His friend Lafayette tells us that he was one of the many callers at the Crown Prince's house, and that Bernadotte, on seeing his name on the list, started to return his visit, but changed his mind exclaiming: "No, I shall not see him, I do not wish to see him; I am too unhappy," Lafayette claimed to have received a letter from him at the opening of his campaign of 1813 assuring him that he would "remain faithful to liberty and to the traditional interests of France," and attributed his unwillingness to meet him to his inability to reconcile such a statement with the restoration of the Bourbons.

There was a story current in Paris that Bernadotte called upon his former comrade, Marshal Lefebvre, Duke of Dantzic, and expressed his regret to the marshal that his old friend, "La bonne Maréchale," was not at home. A door opened, and from the next room Bernadotte heard the unmistakable voice of "Madame Sans-Gêne" exclaiming, "I am at home, Traitor, but I don't want to see you."

Madame Junot, Duchess of Abrantés, tells us that some of the Prince's officers commandeered her apartments as their billet. She wrote an indignant letter to the Prince Royal, who through his aide-de-

camp, the charming Count Brahé, sent apologies and made amends.

Besides the acquisition of Norway, Bernadotte had been promised the island of Guadeloupe ; but, after much negotiation and in compliance with pressure from England, he agreed to relinquish his right to the West Indian Colony in exchange for the handsome solatium of a million sterling.

Having paid a courtesy visit to the restored King Louis XVIII., whom he is said to have advised to govern France " with an iron hand in a velvet glove," having accomplished all the political objects of his visit, and having spent a fortnight mainly with his family and his personal friends, he bade his last farewell to France on 1st May, and, after passing through Brussels and collecting his forces, proceeded to Lübeck, on the shores of the Baltic.

At the beginning of June he was back in Stockholm, where, wrote the British Minister at the Swedish Court, he " was received with every demonstration of joy, the feelings of the people towards him having been raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm."

CHAPTER XXII

BERNADOTTE BECOMES CROWN PRINCE OF NORWAY

JUNE–NOVEMBER 1814

IMMEDIATELY after his return to Sweden the Crown Prince was encountered by a formidable emergency. It has been related in a former chapter that, by the Treaty of Kiel,* the Kingdom of Norway had been ceded to the King of Sweden. The treaty settled the question, so far as the King of Denmark was concerned. But the Norwegians were not content to be bartered away in this fashion. They admitted that the King had a right to abdicate his crown ; but they denied his right to dispose of Norway without the consent of its people. Prince Christian Frederick of Denmark,^b the Viceroy of Norway, assumed the title of Regent, and summoned a Convention, which met at Eidsvold, near Christiania, on 10th April 1814. This assembly declared that Norway was an independent Kingdom, adopted a very liberal and democratic constitution, and proceeded to elect Prince Christian Frederick to be King. Thenceforward the anniversary of these events, the 17th May, became a memorable one in Norwegian history as the " Day of Independence."

King Christian Frederick's reign lasted for less than six months. His first step was to send an agent to London to ask for help or at all events for neutrality on the part of England. His agent met with a chilling reception, and the Norwegians were

* January 1814 ; see Chapter XVIII, 115, 116, *ante*.

^b Afterwards King Christian VIII. of Denmark.

soon notified by all the allied Sovereigns that they were bound to give effect to the Treaty of Kiel, and that the unanimous intention of the allied Powers was that Norway should be united to Sweden. Christian Frederick at once called the Norwegian nation to arms, and soon found himself at the head of an army of 50,000 men.

The Crown Prince had no intention of allowing the fruit of all his diplomacy and of all his sacrifices to be plucked from his grasp at the last moment. On the 12th of June he left Stockholm for the frontier, before crossing which he issued two proclamations, one of which was addressed to his army, and the other to the Norwegian people. In the former of these proclamations he reproached the Danish Prince for having disregarded the obligations of the Treaty of Kiel, and for having forced an appeal to arms; and he concluded with these words: "Soldiers—I tell you once more, there will be no repose for us until the Scandinavian Peninsula is united and free."

His address to the Norwegian people was quite frank. It rested the proposed union with Sweden on the basis of international agreement; and he then proceeded to dilate upon his favourite text—namely, the advantages which accrue to a nation from the enjoyment of an isolated position protected by natural frontiers. "Look at England," he declared. "The prosperity of that celebrated island is based upon a union similar to ours!"*

In the last few days of July the Swedish troops crossed the frontier and obtained control of the border fortresses, with the result that Christian Frederick's head-quarters were at the mercy of the invader.

The Crown Prince was anxious that the nascent union of two nations should not be baptized with

* Sarrans, ii, 371.

blood. He conciliated popular feeling by releasing prisoners with the declaration that he was not fighting against the Norwegians, but against the Danes who were exploiting them. He sent negotiators to the Norwegian head-quarters, offering Norway a larger degree of independence than she had ever enjoyed under Denmark.

As a result, within a fortnight of the opening of the campaign, hostilities were suspended, and a convention was signed under which the Crown Prince recognised the constitution of Eidsvold with such modifications as should be agreed upon at a meeting of the Norwegian Storthing,* which was to be held on the 7th October.

The seven weeks which intervened between the Peace Convention and the meeting of the Storthing gave time for intrigue and agitation, which were aimed at the rejection of the proposed Union of Crowns. Meanwhile, Bernadotte held his ground; and, when the Storthing met, it came to a rapid decision. The terms offered were highly favourable to Norway, since they involved no loss of independence or of liberty. Norway was to be a separate Kingdom, and to retain the constitution which its own representatives had framed at the Convention of Eidsvold. The only change which was insisted on was the transfer of the Crown to the Swedish dynasty.

Prince Christian, in obedience to the decision of the Storthing, made a complete renunciation of dynastic rights, and sailed for Denmark a few days afterwards. He had hardly time to reach Copenhagen before the Storthing, on 20th October, by forty-seven votes to five adopted the principle of the Union with Sweden. On 4th November they unanimously elected King Charles XIII. to be King of Norway,

* The Parliament.

and recognised Bernadotte and his descendants as next in succession on the Norwegian throne. When a confirmatory statute was passed in the following year, it was recited in the preamble of the Act that "the union between the two peoples had been accomplished, not by force of arms, but by a free convention."

By the Treaty of Kiel Denmark was to have received Swedish Pomerania as a compensation for the loss of Norway. Sweden, of course, refused to give effect to the broken treaty. As Bernadotte had no wish to retain any continental territory, Pomerania was ceded by Sweden to Prussia in exchange for a sum of nearly half a million sterling.

Swedish ambition was disappointed at the form which their union with Norway had assumed. They had expected to see Norway incorporated as a province of Sweden. Events had taken a different X course. It was mainly due to the desire of Bernadotte to obtain a peaceful and permanent settlement that Norway had preserved her constitution and her independence as a separate Kingdom.

This union of two Kingdoms contained some inherent elements of weakness, because the traditions and the political ideals of the two peoples were widely divergent. The Norwegians were democratic in their ideas. They preferred a constitutional Monarchy to a Republic^a; but the idea of an hereditary nobility, or of a social system founded upon class privileges, was repugnant to national sentiment. In Sweden, while there was an undercurrent of republican opposition, the traditions of the country were aristocratic, and the nobility was so numerous and so influential as to be able to maintain a large and sometimes a predominant share of political power.

^a They showed the same preference ninety-one years afterwards in 1905.

In other respects the Union conferred considerable advantages upon both countries. The streams of commerce and of intercommunication, which had hitherto been blocked at the frontier, became confluent; and the life-blood of the whole peninsula was enabled to pass unimpeded through all its natural arteries. The Union also gave to the two Kingdoms that self-contained quasi-insularity which Bernadotte so passionately desired, because he believed that it was calculated to secure, as in fact it did secure, for both Kingdoms the triple advantage of freedom from continental strife, simplicity in their foreign relations, and an era of enduring peace.

When the Crown Prince returned to Stockholm he had every reason to congratulate himself upon the success of his solution of the Norwegian problem. His title as heir to the Norwegian throne rested upon the solid foundation of election by the Norwegian Storting. He had gone, he had seen, and he had conquered. Yet he had spilled no blood; he had made no enemies; and, after Christian Frederick's abdication, he had to fear no rival.

This bloodless Norwegian campaign was the last of Bernadotte's military adventures. Having united Norway and Sweden, he gave up all idea of conquest or of territorial aggrandisement. He sometimes gasconaded to his own immediate entourage, about dating his decrees from Copenhagen: "Yes, gentlemen, from Copenhagen;" or conquering Prussia: "Yes, gentlemen, in three or four months." But it is not uncommon for an old war-horse occasionally to snort and paw the ground in his comfortable paddock. After 1814, save that the phantom of the French throne continued to linger fitfully among his day-dreams, Bernadotte's aspirations were satisfied and his ambitious nature was at rest.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA AND THE HUNDRED DAYS

1815

ALTHOUGH the Norwegian settlement failed to reach the height of Swedish expectations, its shortcomings did not mar the real esteem and popularity which the Crown Prince had gained by reaping for his future subjects a rich harvest of peace with glory at a trifling cost of blood and treasure. He had done more than laurel Sweden with victories. He had also replenished her treasury with millions. He had procured a million for Guadeloupe, half a million for Swedish Pomerania, a loan from Russia, and a subsidy from England. Some of these moneys were allowed to go into his pocket as a recompense for personal sacrifices; but a substantial amount had been applied in indemnifying Sweden from the expenses of war and in the reduction of the Swedish national debt.

The Crown Prince was in the habit of giving the credit for all his achievements to the King, to the people, and to the army. But nobody could have taken these modest pretences seriously. Everyone knew—and he knew that everyone knew—that he had been the real leader of the nation, and that these happy results were the fruits of his generalship and of his diplomatic skill. He had been the moulder of Sweden's policy, the commander of her armies, and the manager of her diplomatic negotiations. He

naturally became the object of an outburst of popular enthusiasm and praise. The national poets voiced the popular sentiments. One of the most distinguished of them, Professor Geijer of Upsala University, broke down from emotion when reciting in public his description of the Crown Prince as "a hero capable of winning hearts as well as battles, the Prince of Peace, the friend of Liberty." Nowhere was he more beloved than in the bosom of the royal family.

"The Swedes," it has been well said, "were grateful and appreciative when they saw this French warrior, this ex-general of the epoch of the Republic, this ex-marshal of the epoch of Napoleon, lavishing upon their aged and infirm King the most tender and delicate attentions, adapting all his habits to suit those of his adopted father, and winning the affection not only of both the Vasa Queens, but even of the Princess Sophie Albertine, great-aunt of Gustavus iv."*

The "apotheosis of Charles John" reached its culminating point when, during the session of the Swedish Diet of 1815, a deputation from the Four Estates of the Realm waited on the Prince and thanked him for the signal services which he had rendered to the nation.

Bernadotte had earned his triumph dearly. His strict fidelity to Swedish aims and interests had exposed him to suspicion, to misunderstanding, and to misrepresentation among his allies. For the same services for which he had been acclaimed a hero in Stockholm he had been dubbed a charlatan in Germany and a traitor in France. Those services have been well summed up by a French writer as follows :

"Placed only in the second, if not the third, rank

* Sarrans, ii. 172.

among the European Powers, he knew how to make his will prevail. With few troops, and no money, he spent foreign millions and sacrificed foreign soldiers in order to win for Sweden an honourable place among the nations, to break up and reconstruct Northern Europe, and, by obtaining for himself a double crown, to achieve what Charles and Gustavus had pursued in vain."*

Nevertheless, the Crown Prince had much to trouble him. He had reason to complain that in the deliberations of the Congress of Vienna the plenipotentiaries of his allies did not show themselves sufficiently mindful of his claims on their gratitude. He was also disquieted by a revival of the underground activities which were aimed at the restoration of the Ex-King Gustavus or of his son.

England gave no countenance to these intrigues ; and the Czar, when approached by the intriguers, told them that the other powers might change their sentiments towards the Crown Prince of Sweden and might treat him with ingratitude, but that he (the Czar) would never cease to regard him with esteem and friendship. He declared that Europe in a large degree owed to him her liberties, and that the rank which he had attained was due to his personal merits, and to the choice of Sweden, which had been justified in the face of the world. This incident elicited from Bernadotte a letter of thanks to the Czar, in which he re-stated his position :

" Elected by the States-General of Sweden, and adopted by the King, I am fortunate in being able to add to my title-deeds your Majesty's friendship and the honour of having retrieved the glory of Sweden. With muniments of title such as these, my rights are more sure and more legitimate than if

* Schefer, 139, 142.



Wellington.

Emperor of Austria.

Blücher.

Woronzow.

Bernadotte.

I were the lineal descendant of a usurper of the time of Charles Martel."

By his allusion in the above letter to "the lineal descendant of a usurper of the time of Charles Martel" Bernadotte betrayed his resentment against Louis XVIII., who had given a sympathetic response to Gustavus's declaration, and had urged upon Talleyrand, his plenipotentiary at Vienna, the desirability of completing the European counter-revolution by the displacement of Bernadotte as well as of Joachim Murat from the giddy heights to which they had ascended. Talleyrand's reply was to the effect that Murat's dynasty was doomed, but that Bernadotte's, resting as it did upon constitutional election and adoption, was as legitimate as that of Louis himself. Talleyrand pointed out that to attack Bernadotte's right of succession was to attack Charles XIII.'s throne, because both rested on the same basis of election. The Bourbon King, having been forced to recognise that, from a constitutional point of view, Bernadotte's new dynasty was firmly grafted upon the old stock of the Vasas, had to satisfy himself with backstairs intrigues, and with a campaign in his official newspapers. The Crown Prince of Sweden was pricked with journalistic pins, one of which was a paragraph to the effect that he was meditating a divorce and an alliance with a Russian or Prussian Princess, or with a daughter of the Swedish family of Fersen.

Louis XVIII.'s plottings for the expulsion of the Swedish Crown Prince from his adopted country were suddenly interrupted by the amazing event which so rudely expelled Louis from his own. Before the end of March 1815 the startling news reached Stockholm that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. One

of its consequences was a change in the attitude of the European Powers towards Bernadotte. The cold water with which they had been douching him was turned off, and a warm stream of flattery and compliment began to descend upon him.

The news of Napoleon's desperate enterprise stirred up in the Crown Prince's mind a tumult of clashing hopes, fears, and sympathies. There was a conflict between his personal feelings and the state policy of Sweden; but he knew how to keep them apart. His personal feelings wavered from week to week. When the fallen Emperor landed in the Gulf of Juan with his handful of companions Bernadotte prophesied that a certain failure must be the fate of such a forlorn hope. When Napoleon reached Paris without firing a shot, occupied the Tuileries, and succeeded in re-establishing his imperial authority, the ex-marshal was carried away by the wonder of the achievement. He declared that he was only restrained from offering his sword to the French hero by the obligation which lay on him to secure Swedish interests, and that he would willingly take the responsibility for all Napoleon's crimes, to be in his place for one instant. He was heard to exclaim that, after all, the Emperor of the French was "the greatest captain in the world's history, superior to Hannibal, Cæsar, or Moses."* But after the battle of Waterloo the broken idol fell from its pedestal at Stockholm as elsewhere.

In spite of the emotions which the Hundred Days aroused in Bernadotte, he navigated the ship of Sweden throughout that crisis with his accustomed coolness and caution, steering her by her star which shone in the same constellation as his own. Her obligations to the allies were at an end; but her

* Pingaud, 325.

foreign policy continued to be bound up with theirs. The French *chargé d'affaires* at Stockholm was dismissed, but was allowed to remain as a private individual and as a personal friend of the Crown Prince. Bernadotte—so far as he could do so consistently with preserving neutrality—favoured the imperial régime, and threw the official press of Sweden into the balance on Napoleon's side. This was due partly to a reaction of feeling in favour of Napoleon, and partly to the circumstance that several of his former associates, such as Lafayette, Benjamin Constant, and Carnot, had identified themselves with the Imperial Government and had accepted important posts during its brief existence.* When the Hundred Days expired, he was heard to speak in favour of a Republic, or of a second Napoleon, and was believed to have dreamt again of being invited to be the constitutional King of a new France. The second Restoration of the Bourbons was a disappointment to him, and he acquiesced in it without enthusiasm.

* Pingaud, 323.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SECOND BOURBON RESTORATION—THE IN- TRIGUES OF THE VASAS—THE COMING OF AGE OF PRINCE OSCAR

1815-1817

WHEN the Bourbons returned for the second time Bernadotte did not conceal his disapproval of the royalist reaction in France and of its attendant persecutions. After the trial and execution of Marshal Ney, he invited Ney's son to Stockholm, gave him a commission in the Swedish Army, and appointed him to be an aide-de-camp to the young Prince Oscar. He also gave a commission to the son of another former comrade-in-arms, General Drouet, Count d'Er-lon, who fled from France after the second Restora-tion; and he appointed the son of Fouché, Duke of Otranto, to be a Chamberlain at his Court.* The royalist party in France revenged itself by instituting a press campaign against the Swedish Prince, and by stimulating the revival of the claim of the young Gustavus Vasa to the reversion of his father's throne.

Louis XVIII.'s first minister to Sweden was the celebrated Chateaubriand, who received the post as a reward for a brilliant brochure in favour of the Bourbons, the timely publication of which blew a capful of wind into the idle sails of the first Restora-tion. The appointment was not acceptable to Ber-nadotte, and did not satisfy Chateaubriand, who

* Pingaud, 366.

never went to Stockholm, and, after drawing his salary for ten months, resigned in favour of the *chargé d'affaires*, de Rumigny. De Rumigny in due course made way for the Comte de Gabriac. Both were Bonapartists who had rallied to Louis XVIII. and thus harboured a double resentment against Bernadotte. They were instructed to take note of all the weaknesses of "the *parvenu* Prince," and to hold a kind of "watching brief" for the dethroned Vasas.* They carried out these instructions to the letter, and their despatches form a rich granary from which Bernadotte's enemies have drawn some of their most effective materials.

These French diplomats were not insensible to the fascination which Bernadotte's career and personality exercised upon nearly all who approached him. Their criticisms were principally directed at those incongruities and extravagances of thought and language—the indelible marks of raciality—which became more marked, and more out of place, when the old Gascon, who had been so many years one of the principal actors in the mighty drama of his day, had retired from the stage to enjoy that rest which is so rarely the reward of the successful soldier of fortune. Let us quote a few passages from one of de Rumigny's despatches. They are typical of them all.

"The Prince Royal presents two very different sides. . . . On the one hand, one recognises in him a man of elevated genius, ardent, active, enterprising; and, above all, a captain with the gift of audacity and success. It is not uncommon for heroes who shine in the field to appear weak and mediocre at other times and in relation to other objects. . . . He is agitated by the weaknesses of a restless, irritable, irresolute spirit. . . . He is an ambitious personage

* Pingaud, 319.

raised by events beyond the bounds of the wildest imagination, who is not satisfied with his lot. . . . His political principles have no settled lines. In the same breath he speaks like an absolute despot, and like a republican demagogue. . . . This medley is the result of the studies and impressions of his youth, which took such deep root as to be difficult to destroy. . . . His greatest talent is to impose upon others by the effect of his elocution. . . . It is true that he has the gift of eloquence, vehement, impetuous, passionate, which seduces and carries away his hearers, not by its force or reason, but by its energy and volubility. He has also the great accomplishment of knowing how to charm by his affable and ingratiating manners. . . ."^a

In spite of his dislike of the Bourbons, the Crown Prince refused to countenance any of the Bonapartist or republican plots for their overthrow. One of these conspiracies aimed at placing the Prince of Orange on the throne of France. The Prince was a brother-in-law of the Czar, and the conspirators sought to obtain the concurrence of Russia and of Sweden. Bernadotte refused to receive the agent whom they sent to Stockholm, and the plot fizzled out from want of encouragement.^b

It was at this period that a poison plot against the lives of the Crown Prince and of his son was discovered, and was widely advertised in Europe. Its only effect in Sweden was to evoke addresses of loyalty and affection from all estates of the realm, as well as from the army and from the citizens.

To the military deputation he responded with an invitation that they should never hesitate to come forward as his mentors in the path of duty :

" You know," he said to them, " that I act, and

^a Pingaud, 439.

^b Idem, 333 et seq.

that I always wish to act, in harmony with the law. But if, forgetful of what I owe you and of my character and principles, I were ever to allow myself to be so intoxicated by the cup of power as to assail your liberties, I ask you not to hesitate to recall me to the path of duty. It is the duty of brave men to speak with frankness and loyalty. My heart will always be ready to listen to you, but, if I should be so blind to my glory and to my interests as to refuse to listen to you, I am willing that you should turn against me the arms which you now offer for my defence."

To the deputation from the citizens of Stockholm he vindicated his legitimacy resting upon the election by the nation and upon adoption by the King :

" If I could trace my ancestry to the time of Charles Martel, I should value it solely for your sakes. For myself, I am satisfied with the services which I have rendered, and with the glory to which I owe my elevation. These claims of mine were confirmed and ratified by the adoption of the King and by the unanimous choice of a free people. Here lie the foundations of my rights, and, until honour and justice are banished from the world, they will be more legitimate, and more sacred, than if I were descended from Odin."*

In these florid passages we recognise our old friend, the Gascon sergeant of the days of the French Revolution.

In the summer of the same year Prince Oscar attained his majority and took his seat at the Council of State. He had learned the Swedish language, and was a general favourite. On this occasion the Crown Prince delivered an address which attracted much attention, and was published in several foreign newspapers, including the *Moniteur*. A passage referring to the course of education which he had prescribed

* Sarrans, ii. 193-195.

for his son may help to explain the continuance and stability of the Bernadotte dynasty :

" In preparing you for the rank to which you are called, I have principally insisted on the study of history, which has made you familiar with the origin and source of princely titles, and the means by which they are maintained or destroyed. Your studies must have convinced you that it is the duty of a prince to justify his rank by conspicuous virtues and superior qualities ; that the admiration of his people is to be won by actions that are great, and their love by actions that are good."

The old King Charles XIII. addressed a touching speech to his adoptive grandson, in which he placed on record his grateful and affectionate feelings towards Bernadotte.

" My age and infirmities," said the old King, " disable me from giving adequate expression, at this solemn moment, to the thoughts which are prompted by my long experience of life and by my tender affection for you. I shall only remind you that one day you will rule over two free peoples. Prove to them, by respecting their rights, the way in which you wish them to respect yours. Do not forget, dear grandchild, that I impose upon you to-day a sacred duty—namely, to repay, when I am gone, the debt which I owe your father for the kind attentions and for the untiring tenderness which he has lavished on me from the day that he united his lot with that of this country. Always be to him, what he has been to me. Be his support, as he has been mine. Render to him all the care, and all the consolation which he has given to my old age."*

This speech proved to be almost the last public utterance of Charles XIII.

Meanwhile fresh intrigues on behalf of young

* Sarrans, ii. 199.



KING CHARLES XIV. (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE).

After the portrait by F. Westin.

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Gustavus Vasa were engineered by his German relatives, who requested his uncle the Czar to have him brought up at the Russian Court. Bernadotte offered no objection, while pointing out that it would be more suitable to prepare the young Prince for a private career. At the same time we find him severely reproaching the Swedish Minister at St. Petersburg for having been guilty of the imprudence of requiring the young Vasa's renunciation of his rights to the succession to the Swedish throne. Bernadotte pointed out, in a despatch to the minister, that such a proceeding was ridiculous, because the Prince had no rights. In defence of his own dynasty he proclaimed himself ready to lay down his life, declaring that "the man who had dared to face Napoleon on the battle-field had no fear of anyone else." He directed the Swedish Minister at St. Petersburg to request an audience of the Czar and to read him this despatch, which embodied his personal point of view in characteristically trenchant terms.* The Czar gave no encouragement to the hope of the young Pretender, and the episode turned out to be the last gasp of the Vasas. They never afterwards made any serious attempt to recover their lost throne, and, as the old King Charles XIII.'s life drew to a close, the Crown Prince's position grew stronger and stronger in both Scandinavian Kingdoms.

* Sarrans, ii. 184 et seq.

PART IV
KING CHARLES XIV. OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY
1818—1844

PART IV KING CHARLES XIV. OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY

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CHAPTER XXV

ACCESSION AND CORONATION

1818

THE Diet was assembled at Stockholm in the early weeks of 1818. On the evening of 1st February upwards of a hundred deputies were being entertained at a parliamentary dinner at the Royal Palace. The Crown Prince was representing Charles XIII., who was absent through illness. As the guests rose from table a message came summoning the Prince to the bedside of the King. His indisposition had suddenly taken a very serious turn. He lingered for a few days and died on 5th February. One of his last utterances to those about him was, "I die tranquilly because I know to whom I am leaving my Kingdoms and my subjects, who have always been my children."^a It was noticed that he constantly desired the presence of the Crown Prince, and that the Prince rendered him the solicitude of a devoted son.

The French Minister, de Rumigny, reported to his Government that, during these five days, the Prince appeared to be the prey to a feverish excitement which was reflected in his manner and his conversation. This restless disquietude may have been mainly due to his nervous anticipation of the impending change in his own position; but there was no trace of affectation in his dutiful attentions to the dying King and in his expressions of affection and

^a Sarrans, ii. 201.

sympathy towards the Queen in her bereavement. He was quite sincere in these sentiments, which came naturally to a man of his temperament. Now that this act in the drama of his career was closed, his severest critics were compelled to admit that, down to the fall of the curtain, this obscure cadet of Gascony had well and truly played the part which Destiny had allotted to him of the adoptive son of the last of the Vasas.

Upon the death of Charles XIII., Bernadotte became *ipso facto* and *instantly* King of Sweden and of Norway. This was the effect of the various Constitutional Acts by which his original election as Prince Royal had been confirmed and accepted in both Kingdoms. From the death-chamber he walked to the Oratory, where he signed a solemn affirmation of fidelity to the Constitution,* describing himself, under his new style and name—"We, Charles John, by the Grace of God, King of Sweden, of Norway, of the Goths and of the Vandals." He assumed all the titles of his predecessor except that of "Duke of Schleswig-Holstein," which had ceased to have any reality. On the 7th February the King's solemn affirmation was read by the Grand Marshal in the presence of a host of councillors and of other officers of the State, as well as of nobles, judges, deputies, chiefs of the military and naval services, statesmen, and courtiers. The Foreign Minister, Count d'Engeström, then administered to Prince Oscar, as Crown Prince, the Oath of Allegiance; after which the assembled company, following the form in use under the Vasas, swore to be always faithful to "their legitimate King, the high and mighty Prince and Lord, Charles XIV. John." The British Minister reported to our Foreign Office that "the utmost

* Called the "Act of Guarantee."

demonstrations of popular satisfaction were visible."^a The English and French journals reported enthusiastic manifestations of loyalty at Upsala, Carlskrona, and other provincial centres.^b

In his reply to an address which was presented by a deputation from the Swedish Diet, the King once more struck the key-note of his state policy :

"Separated as we are from the rest of Europe, our policy and our interests will always lead us to refrain from involving ourselves in any dispute which does not concern the two Scandinavian peoples. At the same time, in obedience to the dictates both of our national duty and of our national honour, we shall not permit any other power to intervene in our internal affairs."

In Norway the ceremonies attending the King's accession were simpler than in Sweden. The Viceroy attended the Storting, and the deputies, rising in their places, declared: "We promise and swear, upon our souls and consciences, to be obedient to the Constitution and to the King Charles-John." The President said, addressing the Viceroy: "The Oath has been taken; and we implore the benediction of Heaven upon the King and his Kingdom."

On the 11th May, at Stockholm, Bernadotte was crowned with all the traditional ceremonies that had for centuries accompanied the Coronation of Kings of Sweden. After the ecclesiastical rite, in accordance with ancient custom, he received the homage of an enthusiastic crowd of citizens at the palace gates opposite the equestrian statue of Gustavus Adolphus, who, a little more than two hundred years back, had opened an eventful reign near the same spot.

^a F.O., 73-104.

^b E.g. *Courier de Londres*, 20th March, 1818.

On 7th September the Cathedral at Trondhjem was the scene of his Coronation as King of Norway. No such event had occurred in that old city of the Far North for more than three hundred years. With crown and sceptre, with a royal train borne by three chamberlains, under a canopy carried by eight dignitaries of State, surrounded by grand officers of the Kingdom, ermined judges, pursuivants in coats of mail, and gold-braided generals, ex-sergeant Bernadotte walked majestically to his throne, while a genuine outburst of popular acclaim greeted the herald's proclamation that "Charles John has been crowned King of Norway and its dependencies—he and no other."

Almost the only discordant note that was struck in connection with the Norwegian Coronation was a demonstration of peasants in the neighbourhood of Christiania with the professed object of making Bernadotte an absolute monarch. Whether this movement was a spontaneous uprising against the *bourgeoisie*, or, as some suspicious writers have suggested, was inspired from aloft, is an unsettled question. At all events, the King suppressed what threatened to take the form of a revolt against the constituted authorities, and took the opportunity of emphasising his loyal adherence to the Norwegian Constitution.

Although, as will appear in the next chapter, some ingredients of bitterness were mixed in the cup of Bernadotte's success, he was able to derive unalloyed gratification from the circumstance that, among his Swedish subjects, his accession was received with hardly a murmur of dissent. It seemed that the "Gustavian," or "legitimist," party was virtually dead. One of the incidents of the occasion was so strange as almost to pass belief. The dethroned

King, Gustavus iv., actually wrote a letter of congratulation to his fortunate supplanter, and permitted Count Bonde, who was a typical "Gustavian" and had hitherto held aloof from the new Court, to come forward and to assert a right, which was hereditary in his family, to bear the train of the King's mantle at his Coronation.*

What a complete and astonishing success for the runaway recruit of forty years back, the sergeant of infantry of thirty years back, the revolutionary general of twenty years back! His enemies did not conceal their chagrin. They deplored what they regarded as the surprising bad taste of his Swedish subjects, and endeavoured to explain away all the merit of his achievement. But the completeness of his personal triumph was indisputable. For several years, as Crown Prince, he had been the virtual ruler of both Kingdoms; and it was now made evident that he had won general esteem and approbation.

Readers of the second volume of this trilogy will recognise that, in accomplishing this result, he was repeating the conquest which he had made of public opinion as Governor of Friuli in 1797,^b of Hanover in 1805, of Anspach in 1806, and of the Hanseatic Towns in 1808.^c In all these employments Bernadotte had already proved himself to be a remarkable administrator and a beneficent ruler. A distinguished French general^d has said that Marshal Bernadotte accomplished this result by his qualities of "moderation, justice, and skill"; and one of the most impartial of his biographers^e tells us that "Nobody possessed to such a high degree as Bernadotte the

* Schinkel, x, 10; Schefer, 157.

^b *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 233-283.

^c *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 92-98, 121-122, 197-202.

^d General Zurlinden, *Les Maréchaux de Napoléon*, il. 69.

^e Sarrans, i. 110.

talent for creating order out of disorder, for giving dignity to coercion, for winning the gratitude of the people of whom he was appointed the oppressor." Among the Swedes his task was an easier one. He was not imposed upon them as a satrap. He was the deliberate choice of the nation. Undoubtedly the mainspring of his success was the whole-heartedness with which he identified himself with his adopted countries, and united their fortunes and their destinies with his own.

The removal of all memorials of the deposed King Gustavus IV. was carried to extremes which sometimes bordered upon absurdity. In the palace at Stockholm there was a piece of sculpture representing Gustavus Adolphus embracing a child, which was meant to be the deposed King in infancy. The child was cut away from the arms of the other figure. The partisans of the Vasas threw the blame upon Bernadotte, and declared that he had justified his claim to one of his titles, "King of the Goths and Vandals." * But the incident did him no harm, since the Gustavian party had virtually ceased to exist.

* F.O., 73-105.



KING OSCAR I., BERNADOTTE'S SON AND SUCCESSOR.

After the portrait by Sandberg.

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CHAPTER XXVI

FOREIGN FELICITATIONS.—KING CHARLES XIV. AND THE BOURBON;

1818-1830

KING CHARLES XIV.'s accession received regular recognition from all the European Governments, and a plentiful shower of congratulations descended upon him from his brother Sovereigns. Those which came from the English Prince Regent and from Lord Castlereagh were prompt and cordial; but many others of these ceremonial messages were hollow and insincere. For example, the Austrian Minister at Stockholm was heard to remark in a moment of candour, "All Europe would see this dynasty disappear without regret."* Quite genuine were the felicitations which came from the Czar of Russia, to whom Bernadotte's personality and foreign policy were equally acceptable. Alexander closed a cordial letter with a stimulating compliment. "The success," he wrote, "with which your Majesty has known how to maintain both your dignity and your glory under the most difficult circumstance is a sure warrant of the justice and wisdom which will mark the history of your reign."

Louis XVIII. did not fail to join the other European Sovereigns in formally recognising their new "brother." But he was the only one among them who allowed the mask to slide. He despatched a special envoy to Stockholm, but he refrained from

* Pingaud, 350.

making him the bearer of any decoration or other compliment suitable to the occasion.* Bernadotte retaliated by retaining on the roll of the Swedish Order of the Seraphim the names of the Ex-Emperor Napoleon and of the Ex-King Joseph of Spain. As he had done before, Louis instructed his envoy to note the new King's defects and to report how best to counteract and undermine the "objectionable *parvenu*." The French envoy suggested to his Sovereign that he might launch a European boycott against the Swedish Monarch, but he diluted this sinister advice with praise. He was frank enough to report that Bernadotte remained French in sympathy, and that he was "animated by many generous and even chivalrous sentiments."

At first Bernadotte was suspected of meddling in French politics and of intriguing against the Bourbons. But these suppositions were found to be groundless. It soon became known at the French Court that the Swedish King had abjured his ancient Jacobinism, and that he was in the habit of declaring to all the Frenchmen who visited him that a republic was for France "the maddest of dreams," and that "the only form of government suited to modern societies was a constitutional monarchy."†

As time went on, Louis xviii. became more reconciled to the new order of things in Sweden. The Swedish Minister at Paris, Count Löwenhjelm, was a skilful diplomat with family connections in France, who did all that was possible to preserve smooth relations between the two Courts. He remained a *persona grata* under the Bourbons, the Republic, and the Second Empire.‡ Until 1823 Bernadotte had

* Pingaud, 345.

† Daumont, *Voyage en Suède*.

‡ Idem, 360, 380.

another agent in the French capital in his wife, Désirée, who exposed herself to comment and misunderstanding, by remaining in Paris for five years after her husband's accession, and by haunting the society of the Foreign Minister, the Duc de Richelieu. The Duke, who was embarrassed by her pursuit of him, is said to have described her to Barras as "a little Swedish police agent whom her august husband has put upon my track." She was watched and her correspondence was censored. As a result it was discovered that she was chiefly interested in interceding on behalf of her sister the Ex-Queen of Spain, and in amusing her husband with the social and political gossip which she picked up in the *salons* of Madame Récamier and her other friends. She was allowed to remain under her incognito of "The Princess of Gothland." Louis XVIII. treated her with courteous distinction, sending to congratulate her when she became a Queen, and receiving her occasionally at a private audience. The Swedish King was mollified by these attentions to his wife.*

Let us follow Bernadotte's relations with the Bourbons until the fall of the legitimate branch of that House. After the death of Louis XVIII. in 1824, Bernadotte received Charles X.'s minister, Montalembert,^b with the utmost cordiality, evidently hoping to find an opportunity for a *rapprochement*. He said to Montalembert: "Tell his Majesty that I do not forget that I was born a Frenchman. If I had had 50,000 men at my disposal at the beginning of the Revolution, never, no never, would the Bourbons have quitted France."^c

* F.O., 73-104, 123.

^b Father of the celebrated author and historian.

^c Montalembert, 24th Aug. 1826; Pingaud, 309.

Montalembert, who belonged to that school in which nothing was learnt or forgotten, made no response to these gestures towards reconciliation. He reported to the French Government that an alliance between Charles x. and Bernadotte founded upon community of opinions and reciprocal esteem was impossible. He disparaged Bernadotte's "mushroom dynasty" and represented his throne as an unstable one because it lacked the "cement of legitimacy, which is so necessary for a monarchy." * This view accorded with the personal inclinations of the French King, who continued to interest himself in the cause of the young Prince Gustavus, until his minister at Stockholm regretfully informed him that nothing but a foreign army could restore the Vasas, and that the Swedish nation had the bad taste to be satisfied with their *parvenu* King.

So soon as it was recognised in Paris that Bernadotte's throne was unassailable, Charles x.'s Government showed itself more friendly. While the Paris journals continued to attack Bernadotte, and Victor Hugo went so far as to dedicate an ode to the Vasa Pretender, orders were given by the French Government to correct the *Almanach Royal* by ceasing to describe the Vasas as princes and princesses of Sweden; and a shadowy consolation was offered to Prince Gustavus by putting him forward as a possible candidate for the throne of Greece. †

Bernadotte responded to these friendly gestures. His French sympathies were keenly aroused by the Algerian Expedition, which started shortly before the fall of Charles x. He told his intimates that France could not exist without glory, and that, if he had enough men and money, he would be willing to take part in the campaign. It was in this mood that

* Pingaud, 440, 441.

† Idem, 354.

he was heard to say, with Gascon particularity of metaphor, "I should willingly shed nineteen-twentieths of my blood for Sweden, but the remaining twentieth will be at the disposal of France."^a A Franco-Russian *rapprochement* would have suited Bernadotte, and he tried to bring it about. It would have enabled him to play a brilliant part as a link or a mediator in such a combination.

^a Pingaud, 373.

CHAPTER XXVII

KING CHARLES XIV. AND THE PRISONER OF ST. HELENA

1818-1821

FROM 1815 until 1821, while Bernadotte first ruled and then reigned in Sweden and in Norway, Napoleon ate his heart out at St. Helena. The contrast between their relative destinies was too glaring to escape each other's notice, and they were often heard to speak of each other.

The Ex-Emperor on several occasions denounced his ex-marshal's abandonment of the cause of the Empire and prophesied his fall. For example, in a conversation with Las Cases, he bitterly reproached Bernadotte with not having come to his assistance during the Russian campaign, and declared that, if he had done so, victory would have crowned their combined efforts in the campaign of 1812, and the course of history would have been changed.

"A Frenchman," he exclaimed, "had in his hands the destinies of the world, if he had possessed the judgment and the soul to rise to the height of the situation. If he had been a good Swede, as he pretended to be, he could have restored the lustre and power of his new country by seizing Finland, and by descending upon St. Petersburg before I had reached Moscow. But he yielded to personal resentments, to a foolish vanity, and to every kind of petty passion. His head was turned, when he found himself, old Jacobin as he was, sought after and flattered



Blücher. Bernadotte. The Czar. Emperor of Austria. Wellington.



by legitimate Sovereigns, and in political alliance and friendship with the Emperor of all the Russias, who spared no cajolery to gain him. It was said that it was even insinuated that he might have aspired to one of the Emperor's sisters, on divorcing his wife : while from another quarter a French Prince wrote to him that he was glad to remember that Béarn was the cradle of both their houses. Bernadotte's *house* ! . . . In his intoxication Bernadotte sacrificed both the country of his birth and the country of his adoption, as well as his own glory, his true interests, the cause of his people, and the destiny of the world. It was a blunder for which he paid dearly. No sooner had he succeeded in what was expected of him than he began to feel the consequences. It is said that he has repented ; but he has not yet expiated his offence. He remains the only *parvenu* on a throne. The scandal cannot remain long unpunished. It would be too dangerous an example."^a

Napoleon, pining away in his island prison, may be excused for distorting history and for misreading the book of Fate. The suggestion that Bernadotte's refusal to enter upon a campaign for the reconquest of Finland was inspired by "personal resentments," "foolish vanity," and "petty passions" was demonstrably false. His manifest motive for declining to take part in what would have been a mad enterprise lay in his fixed determination not to commit his adopted country to a disastrous conflict with Russia.

In another conversation with Las Cases, Napoleon threw upon Bernadotte the principal blame for the fall of the Empire.

"Bernadotte," he said, "was the serpent nourished in our bosom. He had no sooner left us than he entered the system of our enemies and became an object of fear and suspicion. Later on, he was one

^a Las Cases, iv. 133-134.

of the chief causes of our misfortunes. It was he who gave to our enemies the key of our policy and of our military tactics. It was he who led the way to our sacred soil. In vain did he plead as an excuse that, by accepting the throne of Sweden, he was bound to become a Swede. Banal excuse, good enough only for the multitude or for vulgar ambition. To take a wife it is not necessary to repudiate a mother, still less to stab her body, and to tear her entrails."^a

To Dr. O'Meara, however, the Ex-Emperor said, in a more candid moment :

"Bernadotte was ungrateful to me, as I was the author of his greatness ; but I cannot say that he betrayed me. He, in a manner, became a Swede, and never promised what he did not intend to perform. I can accuse him of ingratitude, but not of treachery."^b

The Emperor, when he acquitted Bernadotte of treachery, had in his mind what had occurred at the time of his marshal's acceptance of the succession to the Swedish throne. The incident was a vital one in the history of the relations of the two men. Napoleon had proposed a condition that Bernadotte should never bear arms against France. But Bernadotte had refused to agree to any such condition. When Napoleon showed a disposition to insist, Bernadotte had remained firm and had said, "Sire, will you make me a greater man than yourself by obliging me to refuse a crown?"—and Napoleon, after a moment's hesitation, had withdrawn the condition, exclaiming, "Very well, go, and let our destinies be accomplished."^c In taking up arms, when Napoleon challenged him by invading Swedish territory, Bernadotte had not broken faith.

^a Las Cases, iii. 154.

^b O'Meara, iii. 166.

^c *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 307.

Swedish agents are said to have bargained for the suppression of passages in the *Memorials of St. Helena* which reflected on the ex-marshal. If so, the above quotations from Las Cases prove that they were not altogether successful. Bernadotte himself took no chances when he undertook a business of that kind. When the Memoirs of Savary, Duke of Rovigo, reached Stockholm he prevented their circulation among his subjects by the simple expedient of buying up the whole edition.*

Having listened to what the fallen Emperor said at St. Helena about Bernadotte, let us shift the scene to Stockholm, and let us take note of what fell from the Swedish Crown Prince about his former master.

The references to himself in the *Memorials of St. Helena* were brought to Bernadotte's notice, and his defence has been recorded by intimates with whom he discussed them.^b He complained that, from his first meeting with Napoleon in 1797,^c until the invasion of Swedish Pomerania in 1812,^d Napoleon had never done him justice. He did not attribute the Emperor's attitude towards him to hate, or even to unfriendliness, but to his settled policy of preventing any other man from rivalling his own glory. The reason why he (Bernadotte) had had to suffer greater injuries than others was that he was less submissive and more frank in giving his opinions than the other marshals.

Then the ex-marshal defended himself vigorously from the principal charges which were made against him in the conversations at St. Helena. He refused to believe that Napoleon had seriously reproached him for having handed over to his enemies the keys

* Pingaud, 377, 383. ^b Lafosse, ii. 241.

^c *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 273.

^d Chap. V, *ante*.

of his policy, and for having led the way into the sacred soil of France. He described these accusations as mere verbiage, for which so great a man as Napoleon could never have made himself responsible, and he pointed to the correspondence which had passed between them since his arrival in Sweden, in which he had repeatedly warned and advised the Emperor in his best interests. He asserted that Napoleon had forced him to defend himself and would have done the same thing in his place.

The following passage in Bernadotte's defence of himself deserves to be quoted because it deals in a forcible way with a particular accusation which, owing to the picturesque language in which it was couched, has frequently been quoted and relied upon by Bonapartist writers :

" Suppose for a moment that Napoleon can have said that it ' is in vain for me to excuse myself on the ground that in accepting the throne of Sweden I became a Swede, and that a man, when he takes a wife, should not disown his mother.' Well, I will put a parallel case which strikes me as very much in point. Let us suppose that, before Corsica became incorporated in France, France had invited Bonaparte to her throne, as Sweden has done to me. Do you think that, if Bonaparte had heard that the Corsicans had invaded Provence, he would have said, ' Having taken a wife, I must not disown my mother,' and that he would have allowed a free hand to the Corsicans? No. And do you think that I ought to be affected by the words which have been attributed to him? I attach no more importance to them than to the last shots fired by a routed army. . . . So far as I am concerned, I appeal to the facts, and I am confident that in the end they will speak, and that they will be heard."

He then alluded to his own frank refusal to accept any condition against bearing arms against France

when he became a Swede, and added, "After all, our destinies must be accomplished, as he himself said to me on the eve of my departure from France."

As time went on, Bernadotte's feelings softened towards Napoleon. He sometimes took pleasure in magnifying the Emperor's achievements; and on such occasions he showed a disposition to contrast the overweening ambition and consequent downfall of the Emperor with his own comparative moderation, and with the relative durability of his own success. He was in the habit of saying, "What misfortunes Napoleon would have avoided, if he had only listened to me."

On the day of Napoleon's death, 5th May 1821, he told his confidant, Count Brahé, that by some strange telepathy he had a presentiment that Napoleon had just breathed his last. He became convinced that on the 5th May he had been the recipient of a mysterious message when the news of the Emperor's death reached him, a few weeks afterwards, just before a meeting of the Council of State.

The English minister at Stockholm reported to his Government that the King was sincerely affected by the event, and displayed a soldier's sympathy with the brother-in-arms to whom he owed so much of his fortunes.* On this occasion he was heard to say :

"Napoleon has not been conquered by men. He was greater than us all. But God punished him because he relied on his own intelligence alone, until that prodigious instrument was strained to breaking point. Everything breaks in the end. The only things which can offer resistance are goodness of soul and purity of heart."^b

In the form of a letter to his son the Swedish

* F.O., 73-142.

^b Pingaud, 368.

King delivered himself of a sort of funeral oration over the grave of the Ex-Emperor.

"He was the greatest captain," he wrote, "that has appeared upon the earth since Julius Cæsar. If, like Henri iv., he had enjoyed the advantage of having a Sully at his side, he might have regenerated Europe. If he was the greatest man of his age in his military conceptions, I surpassed him in method and in calculation."^a

By degrees the legend of the Empire strengthened its hold upon his memory and upon his imagination. He frequently discussed the career of Napoleon, and compared it with that of Peter the Great.^b When he heard that Napoleon's remains had been brought home, and had been borne under the Arc de Triomphe by the veterans of the Empire, he exclaimed with emotion, "You may say of me that I was once a marshal of France, and that now I am only King of Sweden."^c

A reciprocity of feeling gradually grew up among some of the Bonapartists. Bernadotte's success aroused in their minds a curious blend of resentment and of pride. This point of view was well illustrated by the words which Balzac, in one of his novels, put into the mouth of an Austerlitz veteran: "What a grand time was the Empire! colonels became generals; marshals became kings; and there still remains one survivor to remind Europe of the legend, although he is a Gascon who betrayed his country in order to save his crown."^d

^a Pingaud, 368; Lafosse, iii. 248, 249. ^b F.O., 73-142.

^c Pingaud, 422. ^d Balzac's *Le Médecin de Campagne*, xxi.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SWEDEN UNDER KING CHARLES XIV. DOWN TO 1830 1818-1830

NOTHING is more remarkable in Bernadotte's conduct as King of Sweden than the apparent facility with which he severed himself from the influences and from the environment of his past career. We are reminded of the mechanical ease with which a well-handled ship drops its old moorings and makes fast at a new anchorage.

His foreign policy was based upon the principle of non-intervention. He abstained systematically from interference in the affairs of other nations, where the interests of his own Kingdoms were not concerned. He made few treaties that were not purely commercial ones, gained none but peaceful and domestic victories, and embarked in no adventures save in pursuit of internal reconstruction and development. He accomplished for Sweden some of the results which, by different methods, Queen Victoria and her ministers achieved for England. He revived the national faith in monarchical institutions; consolidated his throne, won the confidence of his subjects, and guided them along paths of prosperity.

The political history of the two Scandinavian Kingdoms during Charles XIV.'s reign found its expression in a series of intermittent sessions of the Swedish Diet, which met every five years, and of the Norwegian Storting, which met every three years.

These meetings of his two parliaments caused him a multitude of recurrent difficulties, and taxed his resourcefulness to the utmost. The majority of the political issues of his day were so transitory and so local in point of significance that a continuous record of the events of his reign and of the proceedings of his parliaments would have very little interest for a modern reader. That is why nearly all the writers, who have touched upon the subject, have preferred to group the events of Charles XIV.'s reign under various heads of activity. We propose to follow their example and to sketch, in the present chapter, the general character of the King's relations with the Swedish Government and with the Swedish Parliament during the first twelve years of his reign. At the end of that period a new set of problems arose when the revolutionary storms of 1830 broke over Europe.

The King made his home in Sweden, only visiting Norway at duty's call. This was the natural consequence of events. He used to speak of Sweden as his "elder daughter," because it was Sweden that had first elected him Crown Prince, and he had been a Swedish Prince for four years when the Crown of Norway was added to his patrimony. Among his Swedish ministers were many men of merit, such as the brothers Löwenhjelm, Admiral Cederström, Engeström, Wetterstedt, Klinberg, Kogman, and Wirzen. But these distinguished statesmen were little more than highly placed advisers, whose counsel the King received and weighed but did not always follow.

Indeed, within well-defined limits, the King was enabled by the Constitution to exercise an extensive influence upon the government of Sweden.* He could not negotiate loans, alter the currency, alienate

* Schefer, 5.

national territory, remove a judge without just cause, or deprive a subject of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The making of laws and the raising of taxes were the characteristic functions of the Diet. But with the King lay the power of declaring war and of concluding treaties, after stating his reasons to his Council and after hearing what they had to say. He was Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy; and, in the administration of government, his prestige and his popularity contributed to make his authority predominant.

Although Bernadotte had served for six years under the imperial system of Napoleon, his aims and methods of government differed widely from those of the Ex-Emperor. While Napoleon dreamt of a limitless empire, Charles xiv. was content with insular isolation. While Napoleon waved his mailed fist in the face of his subjects and of the world, Charles xiv. hardly ever allowed the iron hand to peep from under the velvet glove. The stability of his dynasty developed gradually and silently. From time to time its growth was observable on state occasions such as the marriage of his son to Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg in 1823, and the coronation of his wife as Queen of Sweden and Norway in 1829.*

The Swedish Council constituted a small Cabinet or Committee of State, comprising the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, four Secretaries of State (who were only called in when their respective departments were concerned), and six councillors without special portfolios, half of whom were civilians. They, or one or more of them, were bound to advise the King upon the several questions

* See p. 217, *post*. Princess Josephine was a daughter of Eugène de Beauharnais, and was a granddaughter of the Empress Josephine and of the King of Bavaria.

which came before the Council, and were responsible to the Diet for the advice which they gave. All decisions were countersigned by the appropriate minister or ministers, and recorded in minutes which were afterwards laid before the Diet. But in Bernadotte's time the ministers were not, in the modern sense of the phrase, "responsible to Parliament," and the King was not always bound to take their advice. The ultimate decision upon many of the questions which came before the Council rested with the King. For such decisions he was virtually irresponsible to Parliament; and his councillors could only be called to account for giving wrong advice or for abstaining from giving proper advice.

The Swedish sceptre was a symbol of real power which Bernadotte wielded tenaciously and tactfully. He derived assistance from his Council, and took pleasure in picking his ministers' brains, and in treating them as targets to talk at. It was characteristic of the race from which he sprang to think aloud. He liked to engage a select audience in animated colloquy, or to apostrophise them in vehement soliloquy, because it helped him to collect his thoughts. A competent writer has said of him that his mind never worked more sanely and strongly than when he was orating or perorating.

The King was generally successful in gaining a complete moral ascendancy over his councillors and ministers. His marvellous career and his varied experience of affairs, his extraordinary facility for expressing himself, whether in conversation or on paper, and the prestige of his military and political achievements rendered his authority irresistible. In the Council-chamber he was a Triton among minnows. A Secretary of State, Count Platen, when reproached in the Diet of 1823 for want of independence

in his relations with the King, defended himself by exclaiming, "The hero who defeated the first soldiers of Europe at Dennewitz cannot be treated by his Council as a figure-head, or as a mere mechanical signatory of state documents."

Of all his entourage, the King's favourite was Count Magnus Brahé, a man of high rank, of spotless integrity, and of great personal charm, whom he raised step by step to be Grand Marshal of the Kingdom. He was a sincere friend of the King, and, although his influence was resented in some quarters, he does not seem to have misused it.

Bernadotte followed Napoleon's example in organising a private police, which kept him informed, *à la* Fouché, of the trend of popular opinion under the surface. The knowledge which he acquired in this way sometimes prompted him to take a line of his own against the advice of his ministers.

In home affairs Bernadotte did not pursue any defined or settled line of policy. He was a progressive conservative, and a dynastic opportunist. In the political battle-field he yielded ground as slowly as he had been wont to do as a rear-guard commander in the wars of his early manhood. Being instinctively fearful of change and being prudent and cautious by temperament, he might have been an absolutist if his tendencies in that direction had not been moderated by a lingering attachment to the ideals of the French Revolution, by a genuine respect for the national institutions which it was his duty to maintain, by a real capacity for good government, and by an innate longing to please and satisfy everybody around him.

The King's conversation was plentifully besprinkled with fervent appeals to the force of "Sacred Liberty," of "Public Opinion," and of the "Spirit

of the Times"; and he was in the habit of describing himself as "A republican upon a throne." In one direction he lived up to these professions. He religiously observed the rules, and paid homage to the principles, of the Constitutions of his two Kingdoms respectively. Within these Constitutional boundaries he did not scruple to use every available instrument in order to stem the current of reform. He used to say that the Swedes had formed their own institutions and had called him from a distant land to defend them, and that he was determined to obey their call.* Yet he always yielded when the popular will had succeeded in obtaining constitutional sanction. In navigating the tempestuous fjords of internal politics he sailed near, but never too near, the wind. He never shrank from meeting his Parliaments. On the contrary, he sometimes challenged their criticism by calling an extraordinary meeting of the Diet in an emergency.

Some of his critics declared that, while the word "liberty" was always on his lips, the only kind of freedom which he was really disposed to encourage was "a boundless liberty to worship, honour, and obey King Charles xiv." But, if he managed to erect a kind of constitutional despotism, it was of a strictly paternal kind. He was sincere in his choice, as his royal motto, of the sentiment, "The love of my people shall be my recompense." Instinct, unaided by any conscious thought or purpose, guided him along the path that led to popularity. Everything he did was designed to win praise by conferring happiness. He never showed more gratification than on an occasion when a voice in a crowd was heard to exclaim, "Look at him! He's our father—God bless him." He did not curry favour with the

* F.O., 73-50, 121-154.

people by setting class against class. We have seen that at first he treated the nobles with *hauteur*. But, as time went on, he courted the aristocracy as assiduously as the mob, but by different methods. He favoured them in the matter of distinctions and appointments, and showed a discriminating generosity in relieving their necessities.

Although the King succeeded in dominating his ministers and his Council of State, it was not possible for him to exercise the same authority over his Parliaments. Their attitude was always outwardly respectful and loyal, but, as time went on, they displayed an ever-increasing spirit of independence, which found expression in the growth of a parliamentary opposition led by Counts Anckarswärd and Schwerin. Anckarswärd was a soldier, who, having been dismissed from active service by Bernadotte during the campaign of 1813, nourished a personal grievance. As leader of the Radical Party, he won the title of the "Great Demolisher." Schwerin, also an ex-soldier, was an avowed admirer of English institutions, and aspired to introduce modern parliamentary government in the English sense.

There was nothing directly anti-monarchical in the opposition movement of which these personages were spokesmen. One of the maxims of their creed was the proposition that "ministerial responsibility is the best safeguard of royal power." They aimed at obtaining for the Diet a more immediate participation in the work of government. Anckarswärd claimed to be a loyal subject, and declared that it was "characteristic of Swedish loyalty to lay the truth on the footstool of the throne, and to make it the interpreter of the people in the cause of liberty and of virtue." The Opposition Party by degrees gained recruits, especially among the nobles and the peasants ;

but their progress, down to 1830, was slow and their influence was slender. The orthodox view of the Constitution continued to prevail, namely, that the Diet should confine its attention to questions of finance and of legislation, and should leave the work of government to the King, acting with the advice of his Council of State.

The King used his Gascon dexterity, and all the state-craft which he had acquired in twenty years' service under the Directory and under Napoleon, for the purpose of countering the opposition. He also availed himself of every weapon of defence to be found in the Constitution, as well as of the twists and turns of a cumbrous parliamentary system. The procedure of the Diet, with its four separate chambers, was labyrinthine in its complexity. He sometimes invited recalcitrant deputies to the Royal Presence, and harangued them in the same eloquent strain in which he had once harangued mutinous regiments in the wars of the Revolution.

For the first dozen years of his reign the parliamentary opposition did not succeed in taking a formidable shape, and it might never have done so if it had not been for the revolutionary wave which swept Europe in 1830.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY FROM THE UNION DOWN TO 1830

1814-1830

THE Norwegian Parliament, or Storting, relatively to that of Sweden, was constituted upon comparatively simple lines. It consisted of one House which could divide itself into two Chambers when the occasion required. The Norwegian Constitution was a democratic one, under which the King had only a suspensory Veto, and was obliged to bow to the will of the Parliament when it had been expressed by the vote of three successive Storthings. King Charles xiv. entertained a strong objection to this limitation upon his royal authority. His repeated efforts to remove this restriction upon his Veto brought him into constant collision with the Storting. In vain did he seek to persuade the Norwegian deputies to their own undoing.

The following is a sample of the bold, if unconvincing, arguments which he put forward on behalf of the Royal Veto: "A representative body," he exclaimed, "which distrusts its King or disregards his advice and thereby seeks to become the exclusive law-making authority, provokes the very danger which, by a false calculation, it seeks to prevent."

The question of the Veto was not the only difficulty which he had to encounter in his relations with his Norwegian subjects. Another fruitful cause of trouble was the jealousy which was entertained in

Norway of any sign of Swedish ascendancy. The extreme sensitiveness of the Norwegians upon the subject of their independence sometimes took shapes which more nearly approached the ridiculous than the sublime ; for example, when they claimed that the royal robes should be made, or at all events that they should be wardrobe, in Norway. More serious were the demand for a separate order of Norwegian chivalry, and the claim that in Norway Kings Charles XIII. and XIV. should be styled King Charles I. and King Charles II. of Norway, and should be hailed as Kings " of Norway and Sweden " rather than " of Sweden and Norway."^a

The question of the abolition of the nobility was the occasion of a prolonged conflict between Bernadotte and the Storting, which was continued for six years (1815-21). The nobility was of Danish origin and of comparatively modern growth. The nobles, while enjoying privileges which were obnoxious to public sentiment, possessed very few of those sources of influence and prestige which in Sweden had linked the aristocracy with the history and traditions of the people, and had rendered it a source of national strength. The Norwegian people regarded the peasantry, who traced their origin to the old Norse chieftains, as the true *noblesse* of Norway. In 1816, and again in 1818, the Storting passed a measure for the abolition of the nobility, and the King on both occasions refused his sanction. According to the Constitution, any bill which was passed by three successive Storthings became law without the King's confirmation. The King left nothing undone to obstruct and to oppose the passing of the law. He tried to postpone it by delay and to sidetrack it by compromise. He hinted at foreign

^a Schefer, 220-221.

intervention, and was suspected of contemplating a *coup d'état*. But the Storting of 1821 stuck to its guns ; and the King finally yielded, as he always yielded, when the decision of three Storthings in succession had been given against him.*

Another burning question was the demand for separate diplomatic representation for Norway. The demand had its origin in the case of an English merchant who was expelled for alleged smuggling from a Norwegian port. England demanded reparation, and, as the result of negotiation, a substantial sum was paid by way of indemnity. The Storting complained that Norway had been sacrificed by the ineptitude of the Swedish diplomatists ; and the Bodo affair became the subject of animated debates in the three successive Storthings of 1821, 1824, and 1827. The demand for a separate diplomatic service for Norway was never abandoned, and remained one of the principal causes of dissension between Sweden and Norway down to the dissolution of the union between the two Kingdoms in 1905.^b A kindred source of conflict was the question of the National Flag. Under her Constitution Norway was entitled to a separate merchant flag, but the King insisted for twenty years upon the Swedish flag being carried by Norwegian ships in foreign waters beyond Cape Finisterre.

Another serious point of difference between the King and the Norwegian people arose in connection with the National Day of Independence. The day selected by the people for this annual celebration was the 17th May, which was the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution at the convention at Eidsvold.^c The King took offence, preferring that

* Schefer, 225, 226 ; F.O., 73-113. ^b Schefer, 238-239.

^c See pp. 135, 137, *ante*.

Norway should date her independence from the 4th of November so as to commemorate the day upon which his adoptive father, Charles XIII., had been proclaimed King of Norway. He pointed out that, in his correspondence with the allied Powers, he had advocated Norwegian independence long before the Convention of Eidsvold.

The dispute simmered for several years, until it reached boiling-point in 1827. In that year an enthusiastic celebration of the 17th May, as the day of National Independence, was followed by a public demonstration against a Swedish political play which dealt with the subject of the Union between the two Kingdoms. The King marked his displeasure by dismissing the Viceroy, Count Sandels, and by appointing a man of a sterner temperament, Count Platen, to that post. He then called an extraordinary Storthing for the following spring. At an audience given to the members of the Storthing the King, in explaining his reason for objecting to the 17th May as a National Festival, imparted to his hearers an interesting piece of autobiography.

"In my long career," he said, "there have been three incidents which have impressed me most painfully. The first was when I was pressed to draw the sword against France, the country of my birth, under whose banners I won the glory which was the principal motive of the Swedish people in choosing me for their throne. The second was when Norway, misunderstanding my benevolent intentions, forced me to invade her territory with an armed force. The third was in the last year, when I learned that the Storthing had met to celebrate the 17th of May."^a

As the result of this meeting, the Storthing, carried away by the King's eloquence, decided to

^a F.O., 73-132, 135.

discontinue the annual celebration of the 17th of May.

In coming to this decision the Storting had not counted with "young Norway." The students of Christiania, in defiance of the Parliament and of the King, celebrated the obnoxious day, with the result that crowds assembled in the market-place, from which they were driven by the police and military. Although the affair was not attended by serious casualties or consequences, it was dignified in Norwegian history with the high-sounding title of the "Battle of the Market-place"; and it had all the significance of a popular victory. The crowds were easily dispersed; but the students really won the day. The Government dropped the idea of forcibly discontinuing the 17th of May, and it was celebrated as the Day of Independence in succeeding years without let or hindrance. The King quickly re-established his popularity with the students. Five years afterwards the English Minister tells us how the students of Christiania, on the eve of the King's departure for Stockholm, marched to the palace by torch-light, and, in a song composed for the occasion, expressed their loyalty and devotion.*

The King was not discouraged in his endeavours to obtain a revision of the Norwegian Constitution. Again, in the Diet of 1830, he brought forward similar proposals, which were unanimously rejected, as they had been in the Diets of 1824 and 1827. It is clear that, if Bernadotte was successful in maintaining and consolidating his Norwegian throne, he did not accomplish his purpose by any servile courtship of popular favour.

The story of his relations with the Storting reads like a running fight between the royal and the

* F.O., 73-146.

parliamentary authority, and the student of that time is tempted to wonder how it was possible, under such conditions of continuous strife and controversy, for the royal authority to retain its hold on the Kingdom. Probably Bernadotte's innate respect for civil institutions and for constituted authority had something to do with it. Readers of *Bernadotte: The First Phase*,^a will remember that this trait in his character had been a steadying influence upon his actions in the chaotic era of the French Revolution and of the Directory.

The Storting reciprocated the respect which Bernadotte displayed towards their Constitution, so that their disputes with the King resembled friendly tilting matches. The King was quite frank in resisting reforms and in maintaining the royal prerogative. He also made it plain to Norway that Sweden was the elder of his two daughters. But he never broke faith with the Storting or violated any of the articles of the Constitution. He always "played the game"; and, when the Storting had won the game according to the rules, he either paid the stakes and surrendered, or made some bold and happy concession at some well-selected moment.^b

Only once did Bernadotte, in his relations with the Norwegian Parliament, drop the buttons off his foils. It was in reference to the question of Norway's share of the Danish National Debt, which had been fixed by international arrangement at a sum of upwards of £600,000. The Storting showed a marked unwillingness to shoulder this burden. They suggested that Sweden should bear a share of it. The King met this demand by asking if Norway was prepared to undertake part of the Swedish

^a *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 36, 76, 258, 370, 412, 465, 473.

^b Schefer, 188.

National Debt. Finally, losing patience in the face of pressure and of criticism from foreign Powers, he collected a force of 3,000 Swedish and 3,000 Norwegian troops. He then proceeded to hold "manœuvres" in the neighbourhood of Christiania, under the shadow of which the Storthing voted the necessary sum.*

In spite of these quarrels there were frequent evidences among his Norwegian subjects of an under-current of admiration for the King's brilliant career and for his finer qualities. On one occasion the President of the Storthing, heading a deputation to the King at a critical moment, addressed him in his favourite character of father of his people. "Nations," said the President, "have their childhood, like individuals, and the father of his country, like the head of a family, must help it to reach years of maturity!"

The King used to reproach his "Norwegian children" for their extreme frugality in the matter of military and naval expenditure. The following is a sample of the rhetorical appeals with which he tried in vain to stimulate them to spend money upon coast defence. "Tancred de Hauteville conquered Sicily with thirty Normans. If Sicily had been animated by a warlike spirit, if she had possessed a few permanent companies of armed men, she would have avoided that shameful enslavement."† The legend of Tancred and his thirty Normans failed to impress the Storthing, which politely rejected the King's proposals.

* Schefer, 237, 238; F.O., 73-135.

† Lafosse, iii. 251, 252.

CHAPTER XXX

HOW KING CHARLES XIV. WEATHERED THE REVOLUTIONARY STORM OF 1830

1830-1839

THE revolutionary wave which swept over Europe in 1830 sprinkled Scandinavia with its spray, thus creating an atmosphere which helped to stimulate political agitation, and to brace the energies of the radical opposition both in Sweden and in Norway. Let us first glance at what happened in Norway, where the problem was less complex than in the sister Kingdom.*

In Norway the official and the middle classes had monopolised parliamentary influence since the Union in 1814. In 1833 the peasants, for the first time, succeeded in gaining a virtual predominance in the Storting. A political conflict ensued which was lifted out of the commonplace by the personality of two gifted poets, Wergeland and Welhaven, who were the bright stars of rival constellations. Wergeland was the leader of the peasants and the creator of a "Young Norway" party, the watch-words of which were "National Independence" and "Equality with Sweden." Welhaven led "the party of property and intelligence," and favoured the maintenance of traditional ties with Denmark.

A weaker man than Bernadotte might have acted upon the maxim *divide ut imperes*, and might have striven to give significance and strength to "the link of the Crown," by playing off the contend-

* Schefer, 239 *et seq.*; Pingaud, chap. xxiv.

ing parties against each other and by exploiting the jealousy which was rife between Norwegians and Swedes. But, although Charles John was often *rusé* in his methods and sometimes displayed duplicity in his diplomacy, he was very downright in his opposition to political reform, and very direct in his fixed purpose of maintaining in each of his Kingdoms the institutions he had found by law established.

In carrying out this purpose he revived, as we have said, in his conflicts with the Opposition, the rear-guard tactics of his early days, only yielding as little ground as possible, and yielding it as slowly as prudence and occasion might allow.

The Storthing of 1833 inaugurated a policy of economy and of retrenchment, and was proceeding to carry it to such an extreme as would have undermined the whole edifice of Government. In 1836 matters came to a crisis, when the deputies rejected several of the measures proposed by the King's Government without even sending them to the usual scrutiny of a Commission. King Charles dissolved the Storthing, the members of which, before dispersing, took steps for the impeachment of the minister who had countersigned the Dissolution Decree. When the minister had been heavily fined by the Supreme Court the King took a strong course. He insisted upon retaining him in office, and at the same time dismissed a minister whose conduct in these crises had given him dissatisfaction.

Having held his ground in this constitutional struggle, the King, as was his wont, made a bold attempt to conciliate Norwegian sentiment without weakening the foundations of Government. He appointed a Norwegian to be Governor-General of Norway, and summoned an Extraordinary Storthing, at which the pending differences between the Crown and

the Parliament were accommodated. He then took up two burning Norwegian grievances. These were the question of the National Flag and the question of Norway's claim to an equal share with Sweden in foreign and diplomatic affairs.

Finally, in 1838, after twenty years of tenacious resistance, he roused enthusiasm by conceding the right to Norwegian merchant ships to carry the Norwegian flag in all waters. In the following year he appointed a joint commission of Swedes and Norwegians to consider and report upon the question of the transaction of the foreign business of the two Kingdoms. Before this Commission had concluded its labours the old King had ended his own. But during the latter years of his life his relations with his Norwegian subjects were comparatively smooth and cordial, and the affairs of Norway gave him much less trouble than those of the sister Kingdom. In 1842 we find the British Minister at Stockholm reporting to our Foreign Office that the King was "extremely popular in Norway."*

In the sister Kingdom of Sweden the revolutionary spirit of 1830 exhibited itself more demonstratively than in Norway. It found a fierce expression in the production in December of that year of an evening newspaper, the editor of which was a radical sprig of nobility named Hierta. Hierta carried on a vigorous onslaught upon the Ministry and upon the King in a spirit of bitter irony under a thin veil of mock respect. The Opposition in the Diet were debarred by the rules of parliamentary procedure from attacking the Sovereign, and were obliged to confine themselves to attacking his ministers. But Hierta, in his journal, recognised no such limitations. He denounced what he called the occult influence of

* F.O., 73-190.

the King's favourites, and pin-pricked the King with polished sarcasm. One example will serve to illustrate Hierta's methods. Charles XIV. in his speech from the throne, had referred to himself as the "universal father of his people" (*père commun du peuple*). Hierta's journal feigned to misunderstand the allusion, and complimented the King upon the deep religious feeling which he displayed in this "touching reference to the Almighty."

Liberty of the Press, which had been one of the fruits of the Swedish Revolution of 1809, had been curtailed by a special law in 1812, in view of the foreign complications by which the country was then beset; and the repressive laws of that day, which were passed to meet an emergency, had been found so convenient that they had been allowed to remain unrepealed. One of these press regulations was to the effect that no newspaper could be published without registering its title and receiving official sanction a month before the issue of its first number. Official sanction could only be refused for some good cause. Another regulation enabled the Government to suppress any newspaper in which dangerous matter had appeared, and to forbid its editor from becoming responsible for any similar publications in future. The abolition of this power of suppressing newspapers was one of the battle-cries of the Parliamentary Opposition. A bill for that purpose passed through three Houses, but was defeated in the House of the Peasants, who were believed to have acted under royal influence. The King exerted himself to defeat the measure, declaring that he would "rather see the extinction of his whole family than surrender his control of the Press."^a

^a F.O., 73-138.

Hierta, however, was not daunted by the King's threats of dynastic suicide. He succeeded, by the exercise of considerable daring and ingenuity, in driving a coach-and-four through the press regulations. He obtained authorisation for the publication of nineteen different newspapers, each of which bore some variation of title and was edited by a different man of straw. He published his "dangerous matter" in one after another of these papers, having eighteen substitutes to fall back upon in case of the suppression of any one or more of his journals. In this way it came about that the Press Law of 1812 became powerless to control Hierta and his nineteen journals.

Still more annoying to the King and his Government was the affair of Captain Lindeberg *—a political writer who applied for and was refused a licence to open a play-house. He published a protest against what he represented as "a monopoly," since the royal theatres were the property of the King. Lindeberg was arrested, and his printing office was searched. Hierta's journal was loud in its protest, and pretended to have obtained a copy of a document seized at Lindeberg's office. The pretended copy was a satirical lampoon on the King entitled "The Sovereign with the long nose," or "King Tutu and his dear son." † The High Court of Justice convicted Lindeberg of high treason and sentenced him to death, which the King forthwith remitted. The Constitution contained a curious proviso which made it optional for a prisoner to accept or to refuse a royal reprieve; and Lindeberg, well knowing that the King would never allow him to be executed, refused to accept the reprieve, and insisted on submitting to the penalty of death. Thereupon the

* Schefer, 249-252.

† F.O., 73-154, 176.

public stage was occupied by an absurd comedy, in which Lindeberg's friends lauded him to the skies as a hero and a martyr, while the Government tried to cajole Lindeberg into accepting the favour of his life from the Crown. For four months this grotesque situation was maintained, while the public was entertained by what gradually developed into a grim practical joke played by Lindeberg upon the King and his Government. At last the King cut the knot by granting an official amnesty upon the anniversary of his landing in Sweden. The amnesty included many others besides Lindeberg, who thus found himself pardoned against his will. The sentence of death was commuted to one of three years' detention in a fortress—a penalty which Lindeberg and his friends complained of as unduly severe. This outlandish farce caused extreme annoyance to the King. Probably there were other European Sovereigns who would have been grateful if they had escaped the tempest of 1830 with no annoyance more serious than the pin-pricks of a Hierta and the whimsical martyrdom of a Lindeberg.*

Another incident of the same kind occurred in 1838. A pamphleteer named Crusenstolpe was sentenced to three years' detention in a fortress. On the occasion of his removal a riot occurred, which annoyed Bernadotte all the more because the heir to the Russian throne was his guest at the time, and was the observer of this untimely occurrence. The Czar had just paid him a short visit, leaving his son behind him, and it was represented that the object of the Czar's visit had been to stimulate Bernadotte to a policy of political coercion.^b The King's anger knew no bounds. It was on this occasion that the Queen made a bantering observation which passed

* F.O., 73-154.

^b F.O., 73-173.

into Swedish history. The King exclaimed, "I will decimate them all." Queen Desideria replied, "Thou decimate them all! Why, thou wouldst not hurt a chicken." The King, however, did not relent. The *émeute* was suppressed by force. The streets were swept by artillery, and blood was shed. The King complained bitterly of the ingratitude of his people, and afterwards referred to this period as the most miserable of his life.*

In spite of these signs of popular discontent which showed themselves spasmodically during the second half of his reign, Bernadotte had a strong backing and a large reserve of popularity among his subjects. It was recognised that he was whole-heartedly devoted to the welfare of his people, and that he had rendered extraordinary services in reconstructing Swedish prestige and prosperity. In this very year of 1838 on his journey to Norway he was the object of striking demonstrations of loyalty and affection in the country districts of Sweden,^b and, although his enemies were able to cause him chagrin and annoyance, they had not the power, even if they had the will, to shake his throne.

It was recognised by his subjects that the King had left no stone unturned in working out the prosperity of his Kingdom. His foreign policy aimed at the development of trade by gaining the confidence and respect of foreign nations, and by negotiating commercial treaties with the principal countries of Europe. He was successful in extending the internal communications by canal and road. In

* F.O., 73-173.

^b One of the deputations which met him on his journey was headed by Baron Palmstierna, ancestor of the Swedish Minister who, in our own time, has done so much to maintain cordial relations between Sweden and England. (Sir Thomas Cartwright's despatch, 1st January 1839. F.O., 73-176).

1832 he opened the Gotha Canal, which linked up Stockholm with Gothenburg and connected the Baltic and the Cattegat. His road across a mountainous range which separated Norway from Sweden caused people to say that "the Scandinavian Alps had ceased to exist."

There was no detail of public health to which Bernadotte did not pay attention. The organisation of the surgical and medical professions, and of pharmaceutical education and appliances; the appointment of competent medical officers in remote districts; the relief of the sick poor, and of deserving domestics; the aiding of poor widows in bringing up their children; midwifery, vaccination, foundlings' hospitals,—nothing seemed to escape him.

He made ceaseless efforts to improve local government and administration. Weights and measures, coinage, mendicity and poor law, insurance, the prevention of fire, agriculture, mines, metals and manufactures, the reclaiming of moorlands, drainage and survey, the clearing of forests from undergrowth, the importation of the best breeds of sheep, and the development of the woollen and linen industries, and of the veterinary profession—these were some of the questions which he took up in a spirit of restless activity, and handled more or less successfully.

His principal obstacles were the conservative habits of the people. He had to overcome much opposition and to incur much criticism. He had to wait a long time before he harvested any public gratitude. In the second decade of his reign his restless activities began to bear some fruit. He had many disappointments; but he accomplished much, and sowed many seeds which fructified after he had passed away.

CHAPTER XXXI

KING CHARLES XIV.'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND 1818-1844

"England is the greatest power on the Globe, and deserves to be so."
Saying of King Charles XIV. in 1820.

"Without England all balance of power would be lost, and this would mean the ruin of the secondary Powers of Europe."
Saying of King Charles XIV. in 1834.

BERNADOTTE always preferred, and sometimes requested, that the foreign ministers to be accredited to his Court should be military men of distinction. He felt more at home with soldiers than with civilians. The preference for his own cloth explains why, of the many diplomats who represented England at Stockholm during Charles XIV.'s reign, the one whom he seems to have found most congenial was Major-General Lord Bloomfield,* an Irish *sabreur* who had been one of the original officers of the Horse Artillery when that corps was instituted. Many a "camp-fire conversation" between them was introduced by the King with the phrase "*Je vous parle, mon général, en camarade*"^b; and on one occasion, when His Majesty was elated and gratified by the perusal of a complimentary despatch from Lord

* Colonel-Commandant Royal Horse Artillery, successively Equerry, A.D.C., and Private Secretary to the Regent (George IV.) Other English ministers at Stockholm during Bernadotte's reign were Lords Strangford, Fitzgerald and de Vesci, and Howard de Walden, Sir E. C. Desbrowe, the Hon. J. D. Bligh, and Sir Thomas Cartwright, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Sweden from 1838.

^b e.g. F.O., 73-146, Nov. 16, 1832.

Palmerston, he let himself go with the exclamation, "*Mon général, jem'abandonne à vous, comme si nous étions camarades en bivouac.*"^a

Under the French Directory, under the Consulate, and under the Empire Bernadotte had always been an *ex-officio* enemy of England. Thrice in the course of his career he had aspired to, or had been designated for, a command in a campaign against England or in a descent upon Ireland.^b But within a few months of his landing in Sweden, he formed a settled conviction, from which he never swerved, that, to quote his own words, "his personal interest and feelings, as well as the commercial, geographical, and political situation of Sweden alike dictated a policy of cultivating the strictest alliance, friendship, and affection with England."^c

A deep impression was made upon his mind by the course which the English Government took in 1810 when Napoleon forced Sweden to declare war against England.^d The English Government, recognising that Sweden was acting under duress, ignored the declaration of war, and neither took any offence nor bore any malice. Bernadotte's attitude towards England ever afterwards was one of gratitude and respect; and he used to say that "England had never acted harshly towards Sweden, and often had been her best friend," that "England was the greatest country on the face of the globe, and deserved to be so,"^e and that he was determined not only to maintain friendly relations with England, but to "ensure their continuance after his death."^f On one occasion he exclaimed that he would always impress upon his

^a F.O., 73-114, 73-142.

^b In 1798, *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 280, 286; in 1801 and 1805, *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 28, 99.

^c F.O., 73-114.

^d *Ante*, p. 12.

^e F.O., 73-113.

^f F.O., 73-150.

son that, "next to the favour of the Almighty and the good-will of his own subjects, the friendship of England ought to be his chief object."

The King was in the habit of referring to Sweden as "the advanced post of England in the north of Europe," and of saying that "without England all balance of power would be lost, and this would mean the ruin of the secondary Powers of Europe." Once he spoke of Sweden as "politically speaking, placed in the English sea," and as "seeking repose only under the protection of Britain."^a As time went on, when he was beginning to feel the pinch of Russian aggression, he looked to England as the only safeguard against the advance of the "Colossus of the North." As between these two Great Powers he used to say that Sweden had "less to fear and more to hope for from England," and he laid down for Sweden a policy of neutrality towards Russia and England, with this difference—that, while hostilities with Russia were to be avoided, but might have to be faced some day, the possibility of hostilities with England was not to be entertained for an instant. "His interest guarantees his sincerity," wrote the British Minister from Stockholm.^b

Speaking to Sir Thomas Cartwright, he once remarked: "I beg you will tell Lord Palmerston that my policy will be strict neutrality, as long as I can preserve it; that in no case will I ever embark in hostilities with England, and with Russia only at the last extremity when war with her is unavoidable."^c Again, when apprehensions were entertained on the part of England that he might succumb to the insinuating flattery with which the Russian Emperor tried to play upon his vanity and upon

^a F.O., 73-143, 165. ^b F.O., 73-120, 15th Jan. 1823.

^c F.O., 73-175, Oct. 1838.

his *amour-propre*, he remarked to the English Minister that "nothing would make him swerve from a strict and faithful neutrality, that he had resisted all Bonaparte's efforts to make him break with England, and that if all the influence and threats of the man who had intimidated Europe could not induce him to abandon the course which he thought best for Sweden, England might take it as a guarantee that he would now resist every attempt to draw him from his policy of neutrality."^a

Only twice did he have any serious difference with the English Government. The first falling out was over his refusal to carry out the financial arrangements which were consequential upon the transfer of Norway from Denmark. He considered that Denmark had played him false; and it was not until Lord Castlereagh and the Czar had united in bringing pressure upon Sweden that Bernadotte at last gave way. The second misunderstanding was in reference to the Levantine imbroglio in 1840. In a conversation with Sir Thomas Cartwright he was understood to promise his "support" to England and to her allies against France in certain eventualities. Later on, he explained that he only intended his "moral support," which was not what the English Minister had understood.^b

In the latter years of Bernadotte's reign the Russian danger became so imminent that he was forced to take steps for fortifying both Stockholm and the frontier between Swedish and Russian Lapland, and for devising elaborate plans for the defence of the whole eastern coast-line of Sweden. He made no secret of these preparations and of his readiness to defend the independence of Sweden if it should be attacked. In 1837 he sent an assurance to the

^a F.O., 73-176.

^b F.O., 73-183, Sept.-Oct. 1840.

English Foreign Office that " though Sweden is small and I am most pacifically inclined, should anyone try to take from me an inch of ground they would find in me, old as I am, the ambition of a great Power." When the Czar visited Stockholm in 1838, Bernadotte took the opportunity of broaching the subject in terms which were characteristically figurative. He said that he did not—like the Doge of Venice, who pretended to be the sole husband of the Adriatic—pretend to be the sole husband of the Baltic, but he certainly was one of her husbands, and as such would be much affected by a war between Russia and England. In such a case he was resolved to maintain a strict neutrality, and he hoped that His Imperial Majesty would not attempt to force him into any other course. The Emperor cordially grasped the King's hand, but prudently made no reply.*

As a general rule, the British Ministers at Stockholm admired the King, made allowance for his difficulties, and were amazed at his phenomenal success. There were exceptions, for we find Lord Howard de Walden, in 1833, attributing to him timidity, jealousy, vanity, and dissimulation.^b A report from Mr. J. D. Bligh from which the following passages are extracted is more discriminating, and shows a juster appreciation of the peculiar difficulties of the King's situation.

" The King possesses talents the notoriety of which was in a great measure instrumental in procuring for him the position in which he is now placed, as well as prudence, which has much assisted him in maintaining that position ; the former have not been diminished, the latter is probably increased, by advancing years. His inability to speak Swedish and his dislike to appearing in public have not injured

* F.O., 73-168, 169, 175.

^b F.O., 73-150. Despatch of April 1833.

his popularity owing to his close application to business and his accessibility to everyone. He has conciliated the nobles so far that none regret the ejected dynasty. The ebullitions of passion to which his advisers are exposed, and the disagreeable positions in which they often find themselves through his adherence to his own opinions, are disregarded because they realise his superior judgment. He is beloved by the army, who see in him a general famous for his former achievements, and a Sovereign who treats them with the utmost affability and kindness."^a

To the English diplomats in Stockholm and in Christiania, Bernadotte's political proceedings sometimes appeared to be vacillating and dilatory. Occasionally they were moved to describe the King's internal policy as "mad" or "inconceivable," and to anticipate a rising or even a revolution. But they failed to appreciate the methods of his "madness," and the ideas which underlay what to them seemed to be "inconceivable," and they did not realise that there was a reserve-fund of gratitude and prestige among his subjects which the King had saved up and could always fall back upon.

His manner of speaking and acting were often bewildering; but they were not altogether unsuited to the Swedish people, who were sometimes spoken of as "the Gascons of the North." Instead of embarking upon a campaign of coercion he sometimes preferred to employ his native weapons of bluff and mystification, or to resort to strategic manœuvres of advance and retreat which he borrowed from his military experience. By these means he usually got his way in the end, or seized a psychological moment for some favourable compromise. His critics were constantly disappointed in their pessimistic prognostications, and were forced to report that, to their sur-

^a F.O., 73-169. J. D. Bligh's Despatch of 4th January 1837.

prise, the King had gained his object where they had prophesied failure, had acted loyally where they suspected dissimulation, and had dispelled the mists which had seemed to them to becloud his popularity.

The Russian menace was a constant source of anxiety to Charles xiv. The pin-pricks which his French compatriots occasionally inflicted upon him caused him deep annoyance and chagrin. But the relations between him and the English Government were—almost without a break—loyal and friendly.

In a conversation with Lord Bloomfield, who was himself an Irishman, the King gave an interesting account of his own narrow escape from having been involved in an invasion of Ireland.* After speaking very sympathetically of Ireland, he referred to Lord Edward Fitzgerald's mission to the French Consular Government on behalf of the Irish rebels. He said that Lord Edward asked the First Consul to send General Bernadotte with an army of 20,000 men, and that he held out sanguine hopes of success. "Our plan," said the King, "was to make a naval demonstration at the mouth of the river Shannon, but make the real descent upon the coast of Antrim."

Bernadotte declared that the execution of this plan was delayed by two events which occurred in 1798, namely, his own marriage and Lord Edward Fitzgerald's death. He added that afterwards the affair "degenerated into the well-known Humbert expedition." He confessed to Lord Bloomfield that, when he had been a French general, he had always looked upon the subject of a separation of Ireland from England as a political *coup d'état* of the greatest importance, because it would deprive England of one of the principal sources from which she drew her soldiers and her supplies.

* F.O., 73-123, April 1824.

CHAPTER XXXII

KING CHARLES XIV. AND KING LOUIS PHILIPPE— A CAMPAIGN OF COMEDIES

1830-1844

WE have seen the effect of the Revolution of 1830 upon the internal politics of Sweden and Norway. It also had its effect upon Bernadotte's relations with France. Just as an earthquake propagates vibrations which can be recorded in a distant hemisphere by some sensitive seismograph, so every convulsive movement in France caused tremors which agitated Bernadotte, although they were unfelt by those around him.

The Revolution of 1830 accorded with his earliest aspirations, and, when it took shape in a constitutional monarchy, with his maturer convictions. But his foreign policy was entangled with that of Russia, which was the stronghold of autocratic conservatism. The proclamation of Louis Philippe as Citizen King was welcomed in England, but was received with annoyance and disapproval by the Czar. Bernadotte held himself in hand, and was restrained from any impulsive action by his determination to maintain his own dynasty, and not to court the fate of the French King who had just been dethroned.

While he was hesitating as to the right course to pursue, the young Duke of the Moskowa, son of the celebrated Marshal Ney, arrived at Stockholm as the bearer of an autograph letter from Louis

Philippe announcing his election as King and inviting Swedish recognition. Young Ney had been chosen for this mission because of the intimate friendship which had existed in former days between Marshals Ney and Bernadotte. Bernadotte had formerly given the young man a commission as an officer in the Swedish army and had appointed him aide-de-camp to Prince Oscar. Under the circumstances of the moment this mission embarrassed the King, who at any other time would have received his old friend's son with open arms. The inexperienced envoy gave himself away by flying the tricolour flag from the balcony of the French legation. This breach of diplomatic etiquette gave Bernadotte an excuse for delay, and Ney was given to understand that, as a Swedish officer, he had rendered himself liable to a court-martial. When the Swedish Foreign Office was informed that Russia had recognised Louis Philippe, young Ney was forgiven on conditions which included the pulling down of his flag.^a If he had been so disposed, the young envoy might have turned the tables upon the King by reminding him of the example which he had set when, as ambassador of the French Directory, he had hoisted the tricolour over the Embassy at Vienna in 1798.^b The incident had created a European sensation and had won for Bernadotte in that day the nickname of "the man of Vienna with the little flag." But it would not have availed the French envoy to rake up the republican past of a King of whose meteoric career it had never been claimed that it had "broadened down from precedent to precedent."

This inauspicious incident was followed by a period during which the mutual relations of the

^a Pingaud, 395 ; F.O., 73-142.

^b Bernadotte : *The First Phase*, 313 et seq.

French and Swedish Courts were anything but cordial. Humiliating claims were made against the ex-marshal of France arising out of the grants of property made to him when Napoleon was Emperor. Some of these vexatious proceedings were attributed to personal rancour against him on the part of Marshal Soult, who was Louis Philippe's Minister of War from 1830 to 1834.* Another cause of offence to him was the action of the French Court in mixing itself up with intrigues for the restoration of the Vasas. These intrigues caused no apprehensions to Bernadotte, who declared himself willing to give a safe conduct to the Ex-King Gustavus and his son to visit Sweden, so little did he fear their rivalry ; but the participation of the French Government in such projects wounded him in a tender spot, and exasperated him against the Orleans dynasty.

Trouble impended for some years between the two Courts, and finally came to a head in 1833 through the instrumentality of a comparatively trivial incident which led to a complete breach of diplomatic relations.

On 10th May 1833 a comedy or vaudeville entitled *Le Camarade de Lit* was produced at the Palais Royal theatre in Paris, in which the King of Sweden was introduced as one of the principal characters. The piece was a great success, and was chosen by King Louis Philippe to be played at a fête in the Champs Élysées.^b The following is the plot of this play, which appears to have been amusing and extravagant, and to have been the sensation of a summer season.

A carpenter, an ex-grenadier of the Royal-la-Marine Regiment, was represented as going to

* F.O., 73-154.

^b F.O., 73-156. Despatch from Lord Howard de Walden, 14th June 1833.

Sweden in order to renew his acquaintance with his former comrade, Ex-Sergeant Bernadotte. A meeting having been arranged in one of the royal parks, the *quondam* mess-mates agree to dine together and to celebrate the occasion by donning once again the uniform of their former regiment. Exhilarated by a festive repast, the two veterans indulge in reminiscences, in the course of which the carpenter recalls the circumstance that he had once tattooed his comrade's arm with gunpowder. Carried away by old associations the King pulls up his sleeve and displays the indelible imprint of a Phrygian Cap and of a revolutionary motto. The disclosure of this secret *latouage* is the turning-point of the piece. The King is placed in such an awkward dilemma by this compromising discovery that, in order to save himself from the necessity of abdication, he is compelled to give his consent to the marriage of the hero and the heroine, thus bringing the curtain down upon a happy ending to the play. Perhaps it was this play which gave colour to a legend, which afterwards obtained wide currency, that Bernadotte was tattooed with republican devices.

When Bernadotte heard that he was being lampooned in this way in a Parisian theatre, and that the French King had "commanded" a performance of the objectionable piece, he became violently indignant. He was particularly annoyed at the suggestion of an "abdication" the possibility of which had been mooted by the Opposition in the Diet and had become the subject of gossip and discussion in Sweden.* In vain was it represented to him that the play veiled a compliment to his character as a democratic Sovereign. The Russian and Austrian diplomats at Stockholm seized the oppor-

* F.O., 73-150.

tunity of stirring the fire, and did it so successfully that the King was heard to declare that "the torrent of the revolution must be stemmed," and that "Metternich and the Czar were the saviours of Europe." His wrath was redoubled when he was informed that the authors of *Le Camarade de Lit* promised the Parisian public a new play on the same theme, entitled *Le Roi Jean*.

The Marquis de St. Simon, descendant of the celebrated author of *Memoirs*, was the French Minister at Stockholm, where the Swedish Minister to France, Count Löwenhjelm, also happened to be temporarily on leave. With the object of smoothing matters Löwenhjelm persuaded the King to invite St. Simon to a dinner, which became the occasion of a scene. St. Simon offered some friendly assurances, on behalf of Louis Philippe, to the King, who replied in bitter accents, "That is all very well, but, at a time like the present, the first condition of reciprocal confidence is good faith. Can you assure me that your Sovereign is sincere?" St. Simon's report of the terms of this conversation to the French King resulted in his recall from Stockholm and in a complete breach of diplomatic relations between France and Sweden, which lasted until the quarrel was adjusted in the summer of 1834 by the friendly intervention of England.* The French Government promised to prevent the Parisian theatres from burlesquing Bernadotte, who responded by agreeing to treat the incident as one of those unfortunate mistakes which may sometimes occur even in the most united families—for he claimed to belong to the family of France.

* F.O., 73-149, 73-154 and 27-480. The Lord Chamberlain had prohibited the performance of *Le Camarade de Lit* at Drury Lane.

When the Swedish Court, soon afterwards, danced a quadrille the music for which was arranged by Prince Oscar from Auber's opera *Gustave III.*, the French diplomats shook their heads, and ventured the opinion that the Swedish King had perhaps made too much of the Parisian vaudeville. They asked what would have been said if Louis Philippe had danced at the Tuileries to Gustavian music.*

After the settlement of this dispute a change for the better was observable in the relations between Bernadotte and France. With his native town of Pau he kept up a frequent interchange of compliments. He sent his portrait and a collection of Swedish medals to the local museum, and some vases of Swedish porphyry for the adornment of the Castle of Pau. He offered to purchase the house in which he had been born and to endow it as a retreat for ex-service veterans. He won golden opinions by providing liberally for a peasant woman who had been his foster-sister. These favours were accompanied by gracious letters in which he discoursed affectionately about his native town, and traced his descent to a fabled dame of the neighbourhood who had in the distant past prophesied that a King would be among her descendants. The magistrates of Pau responded by naming one of their streets after him, and by taking every opportunity of coupling his name with that of the most famous of their townsmen, King Henry iv.

The *rapprochement* which started at Pau found its way to Paris. A truce was proclaimed in high quarters over Bernadotte's participation in the campaigns of 1813. His name was inscribed upon the Arc de Triomphe, and his portrait was placed in the Gallery of Marshals at Versailles. Thiers, from

* Pingaud, 409-412.

the Tribune of the French Chamber of Deputies, absolved him from the imputation of treachery by declaring that, when Bernadotte became Crown Prince of Sweden, he became a Swede unreservedly, and must be judged from that standpoint.* Bernadotte himself was fond of citing the case of the great Condé, who he was considered to resemble in character and in personal appearance. Condé fought with Spain against France for eight years (1652-60). But it was easier for France to forgive Condé, who had been defeated by his countrymen on the dunes of Dunkirk, than Bernadotte, who, in the campaign of 1813, had been victorious whenever he met them.

Bernadotte took every opportunity of responding to these advances. When Marshal Mortier fell a victim to Fieschi's infernal machine, the Swedish King expressed effusive regrets. He conferred Swedish decorations upon Marshals Soult and Gérard, upon Colonel Morard d'Arces, who had commanded the regiment Royal-la-Marine when the King had served in its ranks, and upon several French officers who had campaigned under him in the wars of the Empire. He delighted in welcoming French visitors at Stockholm, and charmed them by the cordiality of his reception and by his animated conversation. "Do not speak to me of 1813," he said to Xavier Marmier. "My innermost feelings [*mes entrailles*] are moved when I think of it. If I had a thousand kingdoms to give to France, I could not discharge the debt of gratitude which I owe to her."†

As he grew older his thoughts more than ever recurred to his varied experiences in the French army. He took pleasure in recalling celebrated scenes in which he had participated, such as the Coronation of Napoleon and the Distribution of the

* September 1831; Pingaud, 412.

† Idem, 420

Eagles. He used to point with pride to the arms of honour, hanging on the walls of his palace, which had been presented to him by the French Directory in 1798 ; and many an anecdote was introduced with the words "*Lorsque j'étais sergent,*" or "*A cette époque je venais d'être nommé officier.*"

In his last illness, when a message of sympathy reached him from Louis Philippe, he thanked God that "there is a Frenchman who interests himself in me, and understands that I have been the victim of circumstances." He would have been gratified if he could have foreseen that a time would come when one of his descendants would be welcomed by the French Government as a "grandson of France."

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KING OSCAR II., GRANDSON OF BERNADOTTE.

After the portrait by Emil Osterman.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

QUEEN DESIDERIA*

1777-1860

THE references to Queen Desideria in the preceding chapters have been few and unimportant. The reason is not far to seek. She was a simple, retiring, unpretentious personage who preferred the twilight of a private circle to the garish pomp of royal state and ceremony. She never concerned herself about politics, and rarely showed herself even in the background of the scenes in which her husband played his public part. Nevertheless, her modest personality exercised, on more than one occasion, a favourable influence upon his career, and her life was not devoid of stirring episodes and of singular experiences.

Extraordinary were the circumstances under which Désirée Clary first saw Bernadotte. They passed each other accidentally, like ships in the night, without any presentiment of their wonderful future. It happened in the days before the French Revolution, when he was a sergeant in the Royal-la-Marine regiment, and Désirée was a child of barely ten years of age, living at Marseilles with her father, a rich and prominent merchant of that city. To the end of her life, she was fond of relating this

* The early history of Queen Desideria will be found more fully detailed in *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, pp. 25, 116, 338 et seq., 444, 445, 484; and in *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, pp. 3, 6, 22, 34-38, 69, 73, 184, 270, 317.

strange incident ; and her chamberlain has preserved the story for us in her own words :

"One day," she used to say, "a soldier presented himself with a requisition billeting him in our house at Marseilles. My father, who had no wish to be disturbed by the noise which soldiers usually make, politely sent him back to his colonel with a letter requesting that an officer might be billeted upon us instead of a soldier. The soldier who was sent away from our house by my father was Sergeant Bernadotte, who was afterwards to marry me and to become a King."

Ten years elapsed before their next meeting took place. In the meantime, the Revolution had deluged their country in blood and horror, the Government of France had passed into the hands of "The Directory," and Sergeant Bernadotte had become an ex-ambassador and one of the first generals of the French Republic.

If Bernadotte's progress had been rapid and remarkable, Désirée's experience had been hardly less sensational. Under the Terror she had narrowly escaped the guillotine, while one of her brothers had lost his liberty and another had sacrificed his life. Her first suitor was Joseph Bonaparte. But when his younger brother Napoleon came upon the scene and designed Désirée for himself, Joseph had to content himself with her amiable but less attractive sister Julie. "Désirée," wrote Count Montholon at St. Helena, "avait été la première inclination de Napoléon." She remained his *fiancée* for more than a year, and he remained her devoted admirer until he had become discouraged by the opposition of her family, and had himself passed under the fascination of Joséphine de Beauharnais. The tender feelings with which Désirée inspired him were deep enough,

and lasted long enough, to leave an enduring impression upon the future Emperor.

Her next suitor was General Junot, who sent General Marmont to convey his proposals. Désirée declined them, but is said to have confessed that she might have given a different answer if the messenger had spoken for himself. Happiness seemed to be in store for her when she became engaged to General Duphot, the most brilliant young soldier of that day, whom Napoleon described as "un général de la plus belle espérance." Their engagement was cut short by a tragedy. They happened to be at Rome, where Joseph Bonaparte was French Ambassador, when an *émeute* occurred outside the Embassy arising out of the bitter animosity between the French republicans and the Italian patriots. General Duphot sallied forth to face the rioters sword in hand. Désirée and the other ladies of the Embassy assembled on the corridor listening to the firing and the noise. Presently Duphot's body was carried into the courtyard, and Désirée saw her lover die from his wounds at the foot of the staircase.

M. Henri Houssaye has alluded to Désirée's suitors in an interesting passage.

"Désirée Clary," he wrote, "was intended for earthly honours, and they rested lightly on her head. Let us recapitulate. She is betrothed to Joseph, then to Napoleon, then to Duphot. She refuses Junot and would be glad to accept Marmont. At last she marries Bernadotte. With Joseph she would have been an Imperial Princess, and then Queen of Naples and of Spain. With Napoleon she would have been Empress of the French; with Duphot probably Maréchale and Duchess; with Junot Duchess of Abrantés; with Marmont Maréchale and Duchess of Ragusa. Bernadotte, the

former sergeant of Marines, places the Crown of Sweden on the head of the little bourgeoisie of Marseilles. Désirée said of herself, 'il était ma destinée d'être recherchée par des héros.'"

Bernadotte was in his thirty-sixth year when he came into Désirée's life. He is described by an historian of the period as "un séduisant cavalier et semblant destiné à un grand avenir," while Désirée has been hit off by another word-painter as "la petite Marseillaise gaie et rieuse." It was a marriage of affection. Madame Junot, in her memoirs, tells us that the gay little girl from Marseilles was changed into a lachrymose lover, and that her fondness for her husband sometimes embarrassed and perplexed him. "She was continually in tears," wrote Madame Junot, "when he had gone out, because he was absent ; when he was going out, more tears ; and when he came home she wept because he might have to go away again perhaps in a week, but, at any rate, he would have to go." This tearful mood did not last for ever. Désirée, as the years wore on, was obliged to reconcile herself from time to time to prolonged separations from her adventurous husband.

Madame Bernadotte always remained the inseparable companion of her sister, Madame Joseph Bonaparte, who was as unambitious as herself, and yet, like herself, was lifted *malgré elle* to more thrones than one. Placed in the innermost circle of the Bonaparte family, Désirée became involved in a network of intrigues of which her husband became the object. Napoleon and his brothers, in their relations with Bernadotte, made use of her sometimes as a peacemaker, sometimes as an involuntary spy. She shared her husband's adventures and perils without appreciating their necessity or understanding their

cause. While, as Minister of War in 1799, he was controlling French strategy upon three battle-fronts, she was fully occupied with her duties as the young mother and nurse of their little son, the future King Oscar. When Napoleon's *coup d'état* of Brumaire drove Bernadotte into hiding, she accompanied her husband to the forest of Senart disguised as a boy. After Bernadotte had returned to public life and had become the main obstacle in the path of the First Consul, Napoleon was heard to say on more than one occasion that, if it had not been for Désirée, he would have had the husband shot.

After the institution of the Empire, Napoleon continued to display an affectionate interest in Désirée's welfare: and, as the sister-in-law of his brother Joseph, she was always treated as *apparentée* to the Imperial Family. The Emperor, for political reasons, was careful to keep his unmanageable marshal at a distance from France. From the winter of 1804 until the summer of 1809 Bernadotte was continuously employed abroad campaigning or administering conquered territory. His wife remained in Paris, and paid him a few flying visits, the longest of which was the six weeks which she spent in Poland acting as his nurse, when he was recovering from the wound which he had received in the assault upon the bridge-head at Spanden.*

During this period Napoleon always treated Désirée with marked consideration and favour. In 1808 he paid her a striking compliment.^b The Emperor of Russia sent him a present of three priceless pelisses of rare fur. He kept one for himself, gave one to his sister Pauline, and presented the third to Désirée, who then enjoyed the titles of Maréchale and of Princess of Ponte Corvo.

* *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 184.

^b *Idem*, 200.

The mutual relations of Bernadotte and Désirée were always tender and affectionate. There was only one subject which caused any serious difference between them. Bernadotte's strenuous personality found expression in restless aspirations and in tireless efforts towards self-improvement. Désirée, on the other hand, was contented with the daily round of social life of which her sister's domestic circle and her own were the centres. Bernadotte wished her to emulate the brilliant accomplishments of Madame Récamier and of Madame de Staël, both of whom were his intimate friends. He endeavoured to persuade her to take lessons in singing and in dancing, in history and in literature. She was piqued by her husband's importunities, and he found himself obliged to give way. It must be admitted that he succeeded in effecting a graceful retreat. When he found that she was quite intractable upon the subject of self-education, he dismissed the subject by writing to her: "I perceive that I am giving thee too much advice. So I stop and kiss thee on the lips. Thy Lover, J. Bernadotte."*

When Désirée was informed that her husband had been elected Crown Prince of Sweden she was in despair at the idea of having to tear herself away from her friends and relatives in Paris. Her sister had gone through similar experiences. Julie had wept when she learned that she had become Queen of Naples; and she had resolutely refused to go to Madrid when her husband had been transferred to the throne of Spain. Désirée paid a short visit to Stockholm in January 1811. In a previous chapter there has been a reference to this incident. Her health was affected by a *mauvaise traversée* and by the inclemency of the season, and she was easily

* *Désirée Clary*, par D'Armaillé, 100.

persuaded by her French retinue to shorten her stay and to return to her beloved Paris.

During her stay at Stockholm the Crown Princess must have surprised Swedish society by her unconventional ways, of which the following anecdote affords an example. A lady of high rank, in presenting her daughters, remarked, "Your Royal Highness knows that they are the daughters of a count of the Holy Roman Empire." "Yes, madam," replied the Princess, "and I also know that I am the daughter of a merchant of Marseilles."^a

For a dozen years she remained in France, bearing the courtesy title of Princess of Gothland, dividing her time between her town house in the Rue d'Anjou and her country house at Auteuil, keeping her husband informed about the social and political gossip of Paris, and welcoming all Swedish visitors of distinction who came to France.^b It was the betrothal of her son Prince Oscar to the Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg that called her back to Sweden in June 1823. Upon this occasion she sailed into the beautiful harbour of Stockholm over a tranquil sea and under a sunny sky, and she saw her husband's realm under more agreeable conditions than in 1811.

Thenceforward Désirée remained in Sweden. In 1829 she was crowned as Queen Desideria. She chose this title in order to gratify the Swedes by adopting a name with a Latin instead of a French termination. After her coronation she was constantly on the point of revisiting Paris, but she never carried out that intention.

In 1851 she actually embarked in order to visit the Emperor Napoleon III., who had made preparations to receive her as a daughter of France. But she changed her mind while she was still in Swedish

^a Sarah Lady Lyttelton, 54.

^b See p. 163, *ante*.

waters. The ship returned and the Queen re-landed and never afterwards left her adopted country. She remained to the end of her life as *naïve* and unspoiled as in her first youth. Mr. Henry Labouchere told the present writer that, when he was attached to the British Legation in Sweden, he was frequently sent for by Queen Desideria, who doubtless enjoyed the young diplomat's witty conversation.

She never interfered in public affairs except as the mouthpiece of her husband, whose unmistakable handiwork is manifest in the following entry which she made in the album of a French Minister: "The universe is the country of brave men: Agrippa was adopted by Augustus. A man enters the family of Kings by his goodness, and retains the position by the nobility of his actions." Truly the pen was the pen of Queen Desideria, but the idea came straight from the mind of King Charles xiv. She enjoyed a peaceful and happy old age, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, receiving visits from many of her French relatives and friends, and playing a useful and agreeable part in the life of the Court and of her home.

Queen Desideria survived her husband and her son Oscar I., and lived to see her grandson Charles xv. ascend the throne. Since her day the Bernadotte dynasty has become united by close family ties with the ancient house of Vasa and with the Royal House of England. Her descendants have rooted themselves firmly in the affection of their subjects and in the respect of foreign nations. Among the inherited qualities which have made this achievement possible have been the indefatigable sense of public duty that was displayed by the founder of their dynasty, and the entire absence of pretension or affectation which was characteristic of Queen Desideria.



KING GUSTAVUS V. (GREAT-GRANDSON OF BERNADOTTE).
After the portrait by Bernhard Österman.

CHAPTER XXXIV

KING CHARLES XIV. AT HOME^a

1818-1844

ONE of Charles XIV.'s greatest difficulties was his complete ignorance of the languages of his two Kingdoms. He never attempted to learn Norwegian. He tried to learn Swedish, and employed a tutor for the purpose. But a new tongue could not be easily acquired at the age of forty-seven, least of all by a loquacious Gascon, for whom spoken words were the springs of thought, rather than thought the springs of spoken words. At the diet of 1812 he attempted to read the King's Speech in Swedish from a phoneticised manuscript, but the result was so discouraging that he never repeated the experiment. Ultimately he had to content himself with a few parrot-phrases, which he sometimes fired off for the benefit of his troops or of a crowd. For this purpose he was careful to select favourable occasions when he could safely deliver himself of his lesson without the risk of being interrupted or of being involved in a conversation.

The Crown Prince, Oscar, was brought up as a Swede, and, as time went on, became his father's interpreter or representative on public occasions. The young Prince made such a good impression in these capacities that it was said that the old King

^a Cf. Schefer, 158-182, 272-275; Pingaud, 358, 376-392.

sometimes exhibited jealousy of his popularity, and even took steps to keep him in the background.^a

The King was often obliged to sit for hours as a passive listener to speeches and discussions of which he did not understand a single word.^b He personally composed all important despatches and State papers, including the Royal Speeches at the opening of the Diet. They had to be translated into Swedish or Norwegian as the case might be. He had to sign yearly on an average between 12,000 and 13,000 official documents, all of which, as well as the Agenda of the Council, had to be translated and explained to him. Delay and misunderstanding resulted, and the labour of government was greatly increased. It was generally recognised that the King did his best to inform himself about all the details of his daily duties ; but it was not always possible for him to obtain a true conception of the facts of each problem, or an entirely just idea of the public opinion of his subjects. Complaints were sometimes made in the Diet that the King's Government was being carried on " through the medium of a system of mutilated translations."^c It was not uncommon to see his apartment strewn with official papers awaiting the royal signature, which he withheld until he knew what they were about. He was always on his guard against mistakes, and sometimes he was suspicious of deception.

On one occasion he broached a question at the Council of State, which the Councillors declared had already been determined at a previous sitting. Having no recollection and no note of the determination, he suspected a plot to obtain his assent unawares. The incident occasioned an animated

^a F.O., 72-146, 73-150, 73-194.

^b Pingaud, 357-360.

^c F.O., 73-121, 73-175.

scene, in the course of which he threw doubt upon the accuracy of the minutes which were produced with his signature appended to them, and was with difficulty persuaded by the members and officers of the Council that he had in fact given a decision which had escaped his memory.*

As a consequence of his inability to speak any other language than French, a knowledge of that language, and a facility in speaking it, became essential qualifications for the highest offices. On one occasion a Councillor of State had to resign because he could not express himself with sufficient ease in the only language which the King could understand.

The King used to "let himself go" with great freedom in his conversations with the foreign ministers who were attached to his Court. If they happened to be military men he dropped all ceremony and treated them *en camarade*. Many of the diplomats have left memorials of interviews which always interested and sometimes puzzled them. They were interested by his reminiscences of a career which had run its course through so many incongruous situations and among such diverse environments. They found him full of antitheses and incoherent aims, a liberal in opinion and a conservative in practice, fond of talking, yet a man of action and even of fine actions. They were sometimes puzzled to determine whether, after all his variegated experiences, the King remained at heart a Republican or a Monarchist. Yet he always claimed complete consistency of character and conduct. In truth he was an adaptable Gascon who from the cradle to the grave was always and never the same.

Charles John had very few fads or caprices. He

* Schefer, 190; cf. F.O., 73-109.

had no taste for the chase, the theatre, or the card-table. His building activity never carried him beyond the erection of a country house at Rosendal, which was more like a summer villa than a palace. He found his principal occupation and amusement in the work of government, and in a sustained effort to strengthen the foundations of his dynasty. He attended assiduously to the public duties of his position, visiting provinces, holding reviews, and paying respectful attention to the observance of the state religion. He encouraged art, music,^a science, and education, both by his active patronage and by liberal benefactions. For example, he contributed £2,500 to the reconstruction of the library of Upsala University. The Civil List of his two kingdoms was about £45,000, and his private fortune was a considerable one. Some writers describe him as parsimonious, others as profuse in his liberality. He claimed to have expended immense funds from his private fortune in aid of Swedish public purposes and in aid of her Exchequer. Our Foreign Office was informed that at the close of his reign he was poorer than at his accession.^b Perhaps the truth was that at first he displayed much generosity, and that, as he grew older, he felt the pinch and grew more economical.

He had one eccentricity which inconvenienced many of his acquaintances. The smell of tobacco sickened him to such a degree that he used to defend himself against it with batteries of perfume. If a visitor was so unlucky as to carry that aroma into the royal presence the eau-de-cologne bottle was

^a In 1798 Bernadotte had been the friend of Beethoven, vide *Bernadotte: The First Phase*, 309. He took pleasure in encouraging musicians. Jenny Lind was appointed Court Singer in 1840, and used to speak of King Charles XIV. as "my King and my benefactor."

^b F O., 73-143, 73-144.

immediately brought into action, and the offender found himself sprinkled with an odorous barrage fire.

The King was a hard worker, but he worked in an indolent fashion of his own. He was a late riser, especially in winter; and it was in his bedroom that he chiefly transacted his business and directed his correspondence. It was there that he was in the habit of receiving his ministers, either lying in bed, or pacing backwards and forwards in a majestic *deshabille*. It had been an old habit in his campaigns to throw himself on his camp-bed and to dictate his orders to his staff officers in a recumbent position with his knees for a desk, and, as a King, he frequently spent the morning at work in this posture.*

The state formalities which he maintained in Sweden were correct and dignified, but not imposing. In Norway they were severely simple. He reserved ceremony for ceremonial occasions only, leading until 1823 the private life of an ordinary citizen of high rank. In 1823, after his wife had become definitely installed at Stockholm, and his son had married Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg,^b the life of the Swedish Court assumed a more regular form. Their Majesties and their suite dined at five and supped at ten. The relations of the King and Queen were cordial and affectionate. To him she was always a spoiled child, whom he petted, humoured, and guided. She derived amusement from his gasconades, and was the only person privileged to make fun of them.

When at work in his private apartments he was frequently disturbed by the entry of the Queen, or of Prince Oscar, or, as they grew up, of Prince Oscar's children. On the occasion of these incursions, work

* Schefer, 171.

^b *Ante*, p. 175.

was usually suspended ; and in this way his ministers and councillors became the witnesses of an intimate home life which was as simple and patriarchal as that of any Swedish bourgeois. This familiarity did not breed contempt. With a few exceptions, his ministers and councillors became deeply attached to the King, and were entirely dominated by his personality. It was said of him that he belied the truth of the common saying that no man is a hero to his valet.

Bernadotte loved praise, and received it in abundance at every stage of his career ; for example, from his early commanders and comrades such as Generals Kléber, Jourdan, Marceau, Moreau, Ney, and Desaix, and from his personal friends and admirers, such as Bourrienne and Schlegel, Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier. Sincere and unqualified was the approbation which was bestowed upon him by the majority of the inhabitants of the countries or provinces which he administered during his career—Friuli, Hanover, Anspach, the Hanseatic towns, Sweden, and Norway. Even Bonaparte himself and his warmest partisans qualified their reproaches against Bernadotte by recognising his valour and his humanity. His enemies charged him with procuring a great deal of artificial praise by flattering and favouring historians and biographers, and even by means of propaganda and organised publicity through his ministers and agents.* If so, he was only borrowing the weapon of his detractors, who conducted against him a systematic campaign of defamation. The Bonapartist writers continued to denounce him as a traitor even after the accusation had been withdrawn by Napoleon at St. Helena and by Thiers in the French Chamber of Deputies.

During his reign of twenty-five years Bernadotte

* Pingaud, 376.

never left the limits of his two Kingdoms. He overcame the perils of transplantation, and succeeded in taking firm root, but his position always remained a peculiar one. Owing to his ignorance of the native language, and to the withdrawal of all his French entourage, his situation was comparable to that of a marooned mariner. Although he devoted himself untiringly to studying and developing the material interests of his subjects, it was not possible for him completely to assimilate their spirit or traditions. He unreservedly denationalised himself as a Frenchman, and became a Swede; but he never quite succeeded in acclimatising himself to his new and unfamiliar surroundings.

During the last ten years of his life Bernadotte suffered from ill-health. Sometimes, after remaining indoors for weeks, the old King would suddenly appear on horseback at a review, or at a fête, or upon the occasion of some emergency, surprising the spectators by his vigour and by his military bearing. One night, in the summer of 1835, when he was in his seventy-second year, news of a serious fire in the capital reached his country palace. He started for Stockholm in the middle of the night, arriving at 3.30 a.m., and remained directing the troops and the firemen until the conflagration was got under.* Incidents of this kind astonished the diplomatic corps, and were reported from time to time in their despatches.

The King was a consummate actor; yet he was sincere in all his great rôles. His enemies said that he liked to pose as a chivalrous hero and as the father of his people. His admirers claimed that he lived up to these characters, and that, at all events, he

* F.O., 73-161, July 28, 1835.

"played the parts" to the life. In negotiations he sometimes displayed a duplicity learned in the school of which Napoleon was head master and Talleyrand chief usher. But, when negotiations had ripened into agreement, he was scrupulous in standing to his engagements. His reverence for constituted authority had handicapped him in his rivalry with Napoleon. In a revolutionary age, the iconoclast of institutions and of constitutions always has an advantage over their idolater. But, when he became King, this quality became a source of strength. His strict observance of the letter of both the Constitutions of his respective Kingdoms was one of the secrets of his complete conquest of public confidence, and of the progressive stabilisation of his throne and dynasty.

The King's best traits were his generous humanity of disposition, and his genuine love of peace. In these respects he was in advance of the standards of his time. His humanity was exemplified by the consideration and compassion with which he always treated prisoners and conquered countries. Few conquerors or Kings have wielded more power and have misused it so little. His pacific influence preserved Sweden from the horrors of war, and evolved a condition of tranquillity which his successors have been so successful in maintaining [that the Bernadotte dynasty and a state of peace seem to have sprung up and to have grown up together like twins.

As a Marshal of the Empire he had been known as one "who, without liking war, knew how to make it!" He said of himself that "war had elevated him, and that he had no fear of its dangers, but that he felt it to be the greatest scourge that could be inflicted upon any country, and that its most brilliant

successes could never be commensurate with the evils which it entailed."* The sincerity of these remarks was proved by his resolute resistance to the Swedish "jingo" who advocated the reconquest of Finland. The most enduring monument of his reign has been the peace which he created, continued, and bequeathed.

* F.O., 73-143.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE LAST PHASE

JANUARY 1840—MARCH 1844

WHEN the Swedish Diet assembled in Stockholm in January 1840 the old King had to face a storm so violent that it taxed all his skill and sang-froid to ride it out. The various elements of the parliamentary opposition united for a common purpose, which was embodied in a political lampoon, the refrain of which was, "What is the intention of the Coalition? It is nothing less than abdication."

The movement was not directed against the dynasty, but against the monarch personally. The proposal was to compel him to relinquish the crown in favour of his son Prince Oscar, whose opinions were represented as being more progressive than those of his father. The King deputed the Prince to read his speech from the throne to the assembled deputies. The tenor of the speech reflected the seriousness of the crisis. The stereotyped commonplaces which were characteristic of such occasions were cast aside. The old Gascon renewed his youth, and his oration blazed with eloquence and passion. He painted in glowing colours the prosperity of Sweden, and contrasted it with the abasement and depression which had prevailed when he had landed on its shores thirty years back.

Remarkable was the contrast between the Sweden of 1810 and the Sweden of 1840. He did not exag-

gerate it. It was summarised as follows in *The Times* of that day :

" The population of the Kingdom was so much increased that the inhabitants of Sweden alone are now equal in number to those of Sweden and Finland before the latter province was torn from the former. The commerce and the manufactures of the country have been doubled, agriculture improved, instruction diffused, the finances raised from a state of great embarrassment to complete prosperity, the national debt almost paid off, a civil and a penal code proposed for promulgation, the great canals which unite the ocean with the Baltic have been completed, and, lastly, the secular hostility of the Swedish and Norwegian nations has given way to mutual confidence, cemented by kindred institutions and the enlightened government of the same sceptre."

The old King went on to invoke God to witness his ardent zeal for the happiness of his people, and earnestly appealed to the Diet to maintain it. He struck the chords of pity and of shame by reminding the Diet of his age and of the end that must be near. " Before descending into the tomb I appeal to you once more to understand your Government. . . . National prosperity and independence can only be consolidated by the love of concord, justice, and obedience to law." He seemed to realise that this was the last earthly Diet that he could ever hope to address, and to be resolved to make a supreme effort to stem the revolutionary current. His peroration had something about it that was daring and pathetic : " When summoned, as I soon must be in the course of nature, to another life, I shall implore the benediction of the Creator for the two peoples, who, when left to themselves, are adorned by so many virtues, and who have given me so many touching proofs of their affection and of their gratitude."

But no amount of Bernadottian oil was capable of smoothing the troubled waters. A shower of hostile amendments to the Address, of drastic proposals for political reform, and of venomous impeachments, proceeded from the Opposition. The King and his Government entrenched themselves behind the Constitution ; and the onslaughts of the attacking party were broken one after the other. None of the amendments to the Address succeeded in passing the four Houses of Parliament, and none of the impeachments resulted in a conviction. A rusty weapon was for the first time brought out of the armoury of the Constitution, namely, a proposal to dismiss several of the members of the Supreme Court ; but, while the proposal obtained a majority of votes, it failed in obtaining the two-thirds majority which the Constitution required.

The King was the object of a direct personal attack of a serious nature. The secret service fund had been replenished by advances to it which had been made upon the personal guarantee of the King and of the Prince Royal. It was admitted that the moneys had been spent upon the public service, and the Government insisted that they ought to be repaid out of the public exchequer. But the Opposition succeeded in persuading all the Orders of the Diet to repudiate the debt, which amounted to about £75,000, and to throw it upon the private purse of the Sovereign.*

The Council of State, finding themselves unable to work with the Parliament, offered their collective resignation to the King, and, when he declined to accept it, proposed to resign one by one. The King persuaded them to remain at their posts, but arranged the honourable retirement on the ground of age of

* F.O., 73-186.

an unpopular councillor, thus weakening the force of the attack, without appearing to yield to it.

The Diet lasted eighteen months, during which period the old King, by his imperturbable sang-froid and patience, gradually gave confidence and strength to the conservative forces of the Kingdom, while the Opposition gradually lost prestige and support, when one after another of their violent assaults upon the Constitution and the royal authority proved fruitless and ineffective. One important reform they succeeded in passing, which the King accepted. The Council of State had been a purely irresponsible body, and a measure was passed giving to the chiefs of the great ministerial departments a more real power and a more effective influence in the Council.* The King disliked the change, and, while he accepted the measure after some deliberation and delay, he weakened its effect by appointing to the high office men who by no means represented the extreme views of the Opposition. The Coalition, which had opened the session of the Diet in January 1840 with the cry of "Abdication," found at its close that they had to be satisfied with this single and comparatively slender success. On the whole, the session of 1840 and 1841 ended very favourably for the brave old King. He was able to claim that "if he had not won a victory, he had at all events bivouacked on the field of battle."

When the session was over a marked reaction was observable in the public attitude towards Charles John. The concession which he had made satisfied moderate opinions, and there was a revival of popular acclaim and gratitude for one who had given to his Kingdoms a "thirty years' peace," and had lived to

* F.O., 73-182, May 1840.

be regarded at home and abroad as pre-eminently "the Grand Old Man" of Scandinavia. His career began to be recognised abroad as "one of the most extraordinary in the whole compass of ancient and modern history."^a At home there was a reaction in his favour and an outburst of hero-worship. The year 1843—the eightieth year of his life, and the twenty-fifth of his reign—was made the occasion of a series of fêtes and demonstrations in his honour.^b Stockholm overwhelmed him with lively enthusiasm, and he compared himself to "an affectionate father touched by the devotion of his children." It was a last mark of favour from the goddess Fortune. The old King was permitted to see a gleam of his old popularity illumining the lengthening shadows before he passed away.

In the autumn of 1843 his health began to fail. In January 1844 his last illness attacked him. In February the Crown Prince assumed the regency, and on the 8th of March the King breathed his last. Then, with every mark of a nation's homage, Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, cadet of Gascony and soldier of fortune, was laid to rest beside Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. in the tomb of the Vasas.

^a *Foreign Quarterly*, vol. xxv. (1840).

^b F.O., 73-194, 199.

APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE story of Bernadotte's life down to the time of his election as Crown Prince of Sweden has been told in two previous volumes. The Appendix attempts to give nothing more than a mere outline of the earlier stages of his career.

Jean Baptiste Bernadotte—the son of a lawyer at Pau—was a Gascon of Béarn, and a characteristic type of that hardy and adventurous race. Having enlisted, when a mere boy, in the army of the King of France, he remained for eleven years in its non-commissioned ranks. It was the *ancien régime*, with its narrow regulations, that excluded him from the grade of officer; and it was to the French Revolution that he owed his epaulettes. Thenceforward the words Liberty and Equality rang so true in his ears that he never quite ceased to be a Republican even after he had become a King.

The Wars of the Revolution presented opportunities of which the young subaltern availed himself so successfully that, in less than five years, he began to incur, and to reciprocate, the jealousy and the suspicion of Napoleon Bonaparte.*

During his rival's absence in Egypt Bernadotte married the girl who had been the first love, and had become the sister-in-law, of Napoleon. By his services as General, as Ambassador, and as Minister of War, he forced his way into the front rank of public life, and, had he been so disposed, he might have been Napoleon's first lieutenant. He preferred to become his rival, and to lead the opposition to the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, the success of which enabled Napoleon to make himself First Consul and caused Bernadotte to become an outlaw and a fugitive in hiding.^b

* Bernadotte was born in 1763, enlisted in 1780, and was appointed a lieutenant in 1792.

^b The story of Bernadotte's life down to this point (1763-1799) has been told in *Bernadotte: The First Phase* (John Murray, 1914).

Bernadotte was the last of the opposition leaders to rally to the Consulate, and, having done so, he showed no sign of disloyalty until the First Consul dropped his republican mask and began his open advance towards absolute power. It was then that Bernadotte became the "Obstacle Man" of the Consulate, and incurred grave suspicion of complicity in several anti-Bonapartist conspiracies. Napoleon went near having him shot, but preferred to get rid of him by a distant employment. Bernadotte had accepted the Ambassadorship to the United States when the imminence of a European war induced him to throw up the appointment. When the Republic had ceased to have any reality and the choice lay between a Bourbon Restoration and a Napoleonic empire, Bernadotte accepted the latter alternative as the lesser of two evils.

Bernadotte, as a Marshal of the Empire, was employed as a commander eight times in six years. In 1805 he led the left wing of the Grand Army in the invasion of Austria, and one of the five corps at the battle of Austerlitz. In 1806 he led the vanguard in the advance against Prussia, and the centre in the pursuit of the Prussians to Lübeck. In 1807 he led the left wing in the Campaign of Poland, and in 1808 the army which occupied Denmark. In 1809 he led the Saxon Corps in the Campaign of Wagram, and the army of defence against the Walcheren Expedition.

Whenever he was invested with an independent command he gained distinction and success. On the other hand, when he was under the direction of Napoleon and of his Chief of the Staff (Marshal Berthier), he usually seemed to be ill at ease. He more than once incurred blame for shortcomings which he attributed to unfairness on the part of the Staff and to "a hidden hand" which paralysed his efforts. His grievances were not without some foundation. At Austerlitz he was given an inadequate supply of cavalry, and thereby was prevented from carrying out an effective pursuit of the defeated enemy. Before the battles of Jena and of Eylau he was the only marshal who was not sent the Orders of the Day, and thereby was prevented taking part in the battles. In the fight which took place on the day before the battle of Wagram he found, at a critical moment, that his reserve had been

called away by Marshal Berthier's orders without giving him any notice of the fact, and the position of his corps was seriously affected.

He also had good reason for complaining that he was usually placed in command of foreign troops, because Napoleon was apprehensive of his popularity and prestige among French soldiers. The author of a work upon the Marshals of Napoleon observes that "Napoleon always took care that Bernadotte should never have under his command French soldiers. His troops in 1805 were Bavarians, in 1807 Poles, in 1808 mixed Dutch and Spaniards, and in 1809 Poles and Saxons. Berthier, working out the Emperor's ideas, and himself also hating Bernadotte, took care that, in the allotment of duties, the disagreeable and unimportant task should fall to the marshal."^a

The gravest injury that Napoleon and Berthier did to Bernadotte was the groundless charge which they circulated against him of having disobeyed an order to support Marshal Davout at Auerstädt on the day of the battle of Jena. He received no unambiguous order to that effect, and the accusation has been disproved. But it did him a great deal of harm. Bernadotte was absent from the battle of Jena as the result of having been left out of the Orders of the Day which were issued by the General Staff to the other commanders. Napoleon, finding himself criticised for not having supported Davout at Auerstädt, availed himself of Bernadotte's absence from the field on that day to throw the blame upon that marshal. English historians have, as a general rule, rejected Napoleon's version of the affair, and Bernadotte has recently been exonerated by a writer on the French General Staff, whose opinion is based upon an examination of the despatches and of the other documents in the Military Archives which bear upon the subject.^b

In his civil employments Bernadotte was invariably successful. As the Governor of conquered territories he displayed a combination of qualities which were seldom found together

^a Dunn-Pattison, *Napoleon's Marshals*, 80.

^b Lieut.-Col. Titteux, *Le Maréchal Bernadotte et les manœuvres d'Iéna*, *Rev. Napoléonienne*, iii. 69-152; *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 131-159.

in that age—namely, firmness, tact, and humanity. He also showed the possession of an economic instinct which helped him to promote the prosperity of all the countries which he ruled. The imperial régime, so burdensome and painful when applied to conquered countries by other satraps of Napoleon, became tolerable and even popular when it was administered by this prescient and dexterous Gascon.

When the tide began to turn against Napoleon, Bernadotte became the object of a succession of dynastic intrigues. He was one of the very few Frenchmen who were marked out by public opinion as being capable of succeeding the Emperor. Napoleon acquitted him of actual complicity in these underground plottings; but the Emperor's apprehensions and suspicions were revived. In 1809 Napoleon tried to remove Bernadotte from France by offering him the Governor-Generalship of Rome, with two million francs (£80,000) for salary and allowances. His refusal of this brilliant position surprised his contemporaries; but it was justified by the events which ensued. The sudden death of the Crown Prince of Sweden created a vacancy in the succession to the Swedish Crown, and two months hardly elapsed before Bernadotte had become the adopted son and heir of the King of Sweden.

The story of his candidature and of his election by the Swedish Diet has been related in a previous volume.* But there are two aspects of the episode which are worth recalling because of the special significance which afterwards attached to them.

Bernadotte was not the nominee of Napoleon in the sense in which the Kings Joseph, Louis, Jerome, and Murat were his nominees. The patriotic party in Sweden selected him as their candidate before Napoleon had dreamed of his elevation. The Emperor supported him when he found that he was the only Frenchman who would be acceptable to the Swedes. But Bernadotte had been chosen as a candidate on his own merits, and he was elected by the Swedish Diet acting regularly in accordance with the Swedish Constitution. Bernadotte definitely refused to accept any condition of vassalage, or to agree to Napoleon's suggestion that he should undertake never to bear arms against France. That

* *Bernadotte and Napoleon*, 256-318.

explains why Napoleon said at St. Helena, "I cannot say that Bernadotte betrayed me. In a manner he became a Swede, and never promised that which he did not intend to perform. I can accuse him of ingratitude, but not of treachery." *

It is impossible to blame Frenchmen for judging Bernadotte harshly. They attributed his defeat of Napoleon and the downfall of the Empire to his intervention, and they refused to accept his plea that he had become a Swede. On the other hand, there seems to be some inconsistency in the attitude of those English and German historians who dwell upon the intolerable tyranny which Napoleon imposed upon the nations of Europe, and in the same breath revile the Swedish Crown Prince who made such sacrifices and took such risks in order to overthrow it.

Perhaps it was the Gascon extravagance of his language and of some of his methods that prejudiced English opinion against him, and made it difficult for English writers to give him due credit for the service which he rendered to Europe by making his Kingdom an influence for peace instead of a storm-centre, and by cultivating those ties of friendship between Sweden and Britain which his successors have done so much to maintain and to strengthen. It was as a brave soldier that he built up his reputation ; but it was as a pacific statesman that he did his best work.

* The story of Bernadotte's life from 1799 to 1810 has been told in *Bernadotte and Napoleon* (John Murray, 1921).

APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE Bibliography of Bernadotte has been dealt with generally in a previous volume ; and there remains very little that can be usefully added. Ignorance of the Swedish language has hampered the author in his use of the Swedish authorities. He has dived into them with the help of translators and of translations ; but it has been impossible for him to do justice to the subject as it has been presented by Swedish writers such as Schinkel, Brinkman and Rogberg, Engeström, Trolle-Wachtmister, Geiger, Ahnfeldt, Anton Blomberg, Otto Sjögren, Georg Swederus, and others who have treated it from their national standpoint.

There is no book in the English language that attempts to deal adequately with Bernadotte's career as Prince and King, but some useful documentary materials are collected in Philippart's *Memoirs and Campaigns* (1814), and in Meredith's *Memorials* (1829). The French biography of Touchard Lafosse (1858) is fairly accurate in its facts ; but the author was an apologist. He ignores Bernadotte's Gascon foibles, and paints him as an almost impossible hero. *L'Histoire de Bernadotte*, by Sarrans jeune (1845), is very hostile to the Swedish Prince wherever his relations with France or with Napoleon are under discussion. In other respects M. Sarrans shows himself just and impartial.

The best modern books upon the subject-matter of this volume are M. Pingaud's *Bernadotte, Bonaparte, et les Bourbons*, and M. Christian Schefer's *Bernadotte Roi*. M. Pingaud's book is largely founded upon the testimony of Bernadotte's inveterate enemies, such as Count Pozzo di Borgo, and the French diplomats whose duty and delight it was to regale their Bourbon masters by depreciating and caricaturing the *parvenu* King of Sweden. The chivalrous Count E. M. de

Vogüé observed that M. Pingaud's picture of Bernadotte might be considered "very severe," and added that M. Pingaud sees the dark side of his hero, "who is in turn, or both at once, Iago and Scapin,"^a and Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, while doing full justice to the "copious knowledge and literary distinction" of M. Pingaud's book, has remarked that "perhaps he hardly makes sufficient allowance for the extreme difficulty of the situation" in which Bernadotte was placed.^b

M. Christian Schefer's book is an admirable one, and is written without the bias to which French historians are naturally predisposed when they contemplate the career of Bernadotte. It is difficult for Frenchmen to forgive an ex-marshal of France for having taken up arms against the country of his birth. They cannot deny that Napoleon ruthlessly violated Swedish territory; but they would argue that a man of French birth should have sacrificed the country of his adoption. M. Schefer's portraiture of Bernadotte as King is a dispassionate and life-like one, and his conclusions are confirmed by the present writer's investigations.

The writings of Albert Vandal, Albert Sorel, A. Geffroy, Hans Kloeber, and of Sir Archibald Alison, the published correspondence of Bernadotte with Napoleon and with Alexander I., and the despatches which passed between Castlereagh and the British diplomats and agents abroad have been utilised in the present volume. An exhaustive examination has been made of the unpublished records of the British Foreign Office, and they are frequently referred to in the text and in the notes under the letters "F.O." The relations of Bernadotte with England have been studied, and have been summarised in a chapter which is devoted to that subject.

^a *Le Gaulois*, 22nd May 1901.

^b *The English Historical Review*, xvi. (1901), 802-804.

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